THE AMERICAN INDIAN IN THE AMERICAN FILM

Thesis presented in

partial fulfilment

of the

requirements for the

degree of

Master of Arts

in

American Studies

in the

University of Canterbury

by

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1981

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a chronological examination of the ways in which American Indians have been portrayed in American films and the factors influencing these portrayals. Beginning with the literary precedents, the effects of three wars and other social upheavals and changes are considered.

In addition to being the first objective detailed examination of the subject in English, it is the first work to cover the last decade. It concludes that because of psychological factors it is unlikely that film-makers are capable of advancing far beyond the basic stereotypes, and that the failure of Indians to appreciate this has repeatedly caused ill-feeling between themselves and the film-makers, making the latter abandon their attempts at a fair treatment of the Indians.

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PREFACE

The aim of this thesis is to examine the ways in which the American Indians have been portrayed in American films, the influences on their portrayals, and whether or not they have changed.

Where possible, the main sources have been the films themselves. Accordingly, quotes unaccompanied by footnotes are taken directly from the films. The other major sources of material on the films have been reviews of individual films, books, and a number of articles, an assessment of which follows.

The first comprehensive history of the subject was "The Indian on the Screen" by Jack Spears. (Films in Review, January, 1959). Spears suggested that because Indians were largely limited to Westerns, a genre he perceived as being "addressed chiefly to juvenile and unsophisticated minds",[1] it was natural that they should have been represented by stereotypes. Initially, he stated, there were both "good" and "bad" stereotypes, but during the silent period the "bad" stereotype came to be the dominant one and continued as such until "Broken Arrow" (1950) started a wave of sympathetic films. He concluded by saying that generally Indians had fared best in documentaries, and he hoped that in these Hollywood might "find inspiration for a kindlier and more honest treatment of the American Indian."[2]

The view expressed by Spears was virtually unchallenged until 1969, when the Film Library Quarterly published Ralph Friar's "White Man Speak With Split Tongue, Forked Tongue, Tongue of Snake" (Winter, 1969-70), which argued that since 1909 Hollywood films had repeatedly and without exception misrepresented and ridiculed the Indians. For the next few years Friar was a lone voice crying in the wilderness, for the only other survey to come out at the time was "Hollywood and the Indian" by Robert Larkins (Focus on Film, March/April, 1970), which began with "Broken Arrow", and concentrated on the sympathetic films

1. Jack Spears, "The Indian on the Screen", in Films in Review, 10 January 1959), 18.

2. Ibid., p.35.

that followed, while admitting that not all films on the subject had been sympathetic. Some of the films Larkins regarded as sympathetic have since been criticised by other writers for being anti-Indian.

Evidently unprepared to accept defeat, Ralph Friar, this time with the aid of his wife Natasha, re-grouped his forces and launched an all-out attack in 1972 with a book on the subject, The Only Good Indian... the Hollywood Gospel. The main target of this book seems to have been "A Man Called Horse" (1970), which is referred to with monotonous regularity, e.g. it is abused for three pages in the middle of a section on Catlin's paintings. Indeed, the book reads like an outsize "letter to the editor" written the day after seeing the film. Like Ralph Friar's article, this book claims that virtually every film on the Indians offers yet another example of Hollywood's perfidy towards the "Native American". While the first fifty years are well documented (the period since being dismissed with alarming brevity) and the book contains a wealth of useful information, the Friars fail to maintain an objective distance from their subject, and their efforts to appease their Indian readers make their conclusions of little value.

This time Friar also received support from other quarters. Ralph Brauer's The Horse, the Gun and the Piece of Property: Changing Images of the T.V. Western (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1972) stated that while Indians were sometimes treated sympathetically, such portrayals were marred by the historical inaccuracies and the idea that for an Indian to be "good" he had to be like a white man. Dan Georgakas, in "They Have Not Spoken: American Indians in Film" (Film Quarterly, Spring 1972), criticised the inaccuracies in four recent films which gave the impression of being accurate portrayals of Indian life and customs.

Subsequent works on the subject have not supported the Friars on Hollywood's intentions towards the Indians, although there has been little or no argument on the question of accuracy. The next work to appear was

John A. Price's "The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures" (Ethnohistory, Spring 1973), which was essentially an updating of the Jack Spears article. Like Spears, Price re-emphasised the value of some of the documentaries about Indians and named some recent films which had "approached the documentary quality of Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* ".[3] While this might have suggested that Spears's wish had come true, most of the films he listed have been criticised by other writers.

Hedy Hartman's "A Brief Review of the Native American in American Cinema" (The Indian Historian, Summer 1976) argued that the current films were "steps in the right direction",[4] and the 1977 edition of Philip French's Westerns supported this view.

These, then, are the most well-known works on the subject apart from Georges Morin's Le Cercle Brisé: L'Image de L'Indien Dans Le Western (1977), which was unable to be obtained for this study. Other articles and sections of more general works for the most part contain arguments found in those discussed above without adding anything to the debate. The first of the two viewpoints that emerge is that the Indians were treated reasonably well in the early silent films, but gradually became stock villains until 1950, when "Broken Arrow" started a series of sympathetic films which have dominated ever since. The second viewpoint is that Indians have always been unfairly treated and misrepresented, even in the so-called "sympathetic" films. It is hoped that the following chapters will convince the reader that neither of these views is an accurate assessment.

The first chapter is in the nature of an introduction and is not intended to further the state of scholarship on the subject. This applies especially to the section on the Puritans and their treatment of the Indians. Indeed, it is far too brief and dependent on secondary sources to do so. Opinion on this hotly debated subject seems largely divided along political lines, with the conservative view exemplified by Alden T. Vaughan's New England Frontier and the liberal

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3. John A. Price, "The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures", Ethnohistory, 20 (Spring, 1973), 170.

4. Hedy Hartman, "A Brief Review of the Native American in American Cinema", in The Indian Historian, Summer 1976, 28

view by Francis Jennings' The Invasion of America. Walter Lippmann has pointed out that when confronted by something with which was does not agree one sometimes dismisses "the contradiction as an exception that proves the rule, discredits the witness, finds a flaw somewhere, and manages to forget it."[5] Accordingly, a list of the flaws found in Jennings' work would serve little purpose other than to display the present writer's political preferences. An equally long list of minor flaws could doubtless be found in Vaughan's work were one inclined to look. Indeed, it does contain one obvious one: whereas Jennings correctly states that scalping was of Indian origin, Vaughan suggests that it was invented by whites. However, it does not seem to be displaying an unscholarly political bias to point out Jennings' tendency to accuse the Puritan writers of lying every time he comes across something that does not fit his argument.[6] The section on the government's treatment of the Indians is primarily intended as background material for chapter four and also to give some indication of the historical context of events to which the filmed depictions are referred in other chapters.

The second chapter also is little more than introductory because of the unavailability of the films or sufficient information about them apart from what is contained in the Friars' book, in which the information is selected to support a viewpoint not shared by the present writer.[7] The last thirty years, for which most of the major films were available for study, is discussed in rather more detail in the remaining chapters.

Where terms indicating the relative quality of films are used the criteria are much the same as for any films, the writing, the direction, the acting being the main ones. One's preferences in such matters are to some extent subjective, and while every effort has been made to achieve

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5. Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1949), p.100.

6. Francis Jennings, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975). See, for example, pp.181-3.

7. For a refutation of the Friars' view of the silent period by someone who has studied the films see Kevin Brownlow, The War the West and the Wilderness (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 327-334.

the greatest possible objectivity, especially in assessing the writer's favourite films on the subject, it is possible that in the cases of films of which only one viewing was possible the danger of seeing only the good in films one likes and only the bad in those one does not like may not have been entirely averted.

Other criteria which apply specifically to films about Indians must be used with care, and have not been rigidly adhered to. Two such criteria have been used. Firstly, there is the question of accuracy in the presentation of historical fact and Indian culture and customs. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to judge the relevant films on the basis of their artistic merit, it must nevertheless be recognized that if they are to be judged (by others) as works of art they must be allowed to shape their raw materials into an aesthetically satisfying form, which often means juggling historical facts and embroidering them to make a dramatically satisfying whole. Where Indian culture (and especially religion) are concerned, however, one recognizes that there are limits beyond which artistic licence should not go. Also, while realism is no guarantee of quality,[8] the portrayal of Indians as having a complex culture leads to a more artistically satisfying film than one in which they are treated sympathetically but not developed as individuals or races.

The second of these two criteria is the viewpoint of any given film on the assimilation/separation issue. The writer's assumption is that the latter is preferable. However, the pro-separatist viewpoint of this thesis is not intended as an admission that Indian culture or religion are superior to those of white Americans.[9]

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8. James K. Folsom, introduction to The Western: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1979), p.10. Folsom gives a literary example: a comparison of James Fenimore Cooper's The Prairie and Timothy Flint's Francis Berrian reveals that the latter is far more accurate, but few would consider it a superior book.

9. While comparisons of Indian and white American lifestyles (law enforcement, socialization, etc.) tend to portray the former as more successful, it is worth considering that the comparisons are usually between relatively small Indian communities and major U.S. cities.

Rather, it reflects a belief that Indians are entitled to the same degree of free will as anyone else, and as they prefer separatism they should not be forced into assimilation. Nevertheless, one is reluctant to condemn on these grounds a generally commendable film such as "The Indian Fighter", for example, in which an assimilationist viewpoint emerges only briefly at the end. Moreover, it should be noted that a pro-separatist viewpoint may, in some cases, be merely disguised racism.

Before proceeding with the main text, there are a few minor difficulties which require explanation. Firstly, there is the problem of terminology. The term "Indian" originates from a mistake by Christopher Columbus and is not an apt term for the minority group which it is still used to describe. Nevertheless, as no satisfactory replacement has been offered, the currently popular "Native American" being too cumbersome, it has been retained for this work.[10]

Secondly, the cultural diversity of the various tribes normally creates problems in works dealing with historical Indians. However, in dealing with their treatment by Hollywood and their response to it they can largely be discussed as a single race for several reasons. Firstly, Hollywood has tended to treat them as one race. While tribal conflicts have frequently been portrayed, no significant cultural differences between the protagonists have normally been shown. Moreover, the vast majority of films have dealt with a few of the most well-known Plains tribes to the extent that historical events involving little-known tribes have sometimes been attributed to more famous ones. Also, the Indian response to films depicting them has been uniform. The same complaints have been voiced throughout the history of the cinema regardless of which tribe the complainant belonged to.

Thirdly, while the birth of the stereotypes in 19th-century literature has been discussed, the writer has decided

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10. For a more detailed discussion of this problem see Francis Paul Prucha, "Doing Indian History", in Indian White Relations: A Persistent Paradox, ed. James F. Smith and Robert M. Kvasnicka (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1976), p.2.

not to present a comprehensive survey of 20th-century literature for two reasons: the Western novel has, until recently, been considered unworthy of serious critical consideration, with the result that the relevant books and/or critical material on them are too scarce to cover the subject adequately. Also, the important books and films do not correspond. The major films do not always come from important novels and the major novels do not always become important films. Consequently, where the novels on which the major films were based were available they have been referred to. Otherwise, apart from in the first chapter, literary trends have been referred to only to the extent to which they affect the films.

Finally, sometimes trends affecting Hollywood's portrayal of the Indians have shown up more clearly in films on other subjects, and for this reason the writer has made references to several such films.

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM: c.1630 TO c.1900

For the past thirty years Hollywood has periodically attempted to remove the shackles of past perceptions of the Indians with, for the most part, little success. The burden of the last three and a half centuries is not, it would seem, easily cast aside. This chapter is not intended as an overall view. Rather it is intended to show how the assumptions of the Puritans and their relationship with the Indians influenced the literary treatment of the Indians and how these assumptions were distorted and changed by the literary treatment which, coupled with the failure of the Indians to assimilate, influenced government policy regarding the Indians. At the same time, it is intended to point out a few of the problems that have consistently hindered harmonious relations between whites and Indians.

While the Puritans were not the only whites in America in the Colonial period, they were the most prolific writers. For this reason it was their views that had the greatest influence on later writers. However, later writers both misinterpreted and wilfully distorted their perceptions for commercial and artistic reasons, causing the present reputation of the Puritans to suffer. The following section is not intended to settle the matter either way, but merely to suggest that it will not do to blame the subsequent treatment of the Indians on the Puritans.

To other 17th-century emigrants and explorers America was a geographical entity, but to the Puritans it was a new promised land which God was holding in reserve for His latter-day saints[1] in accordance with II Samuel 7:10:

> Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.

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1. Sacvan Bercovitch, Foreward to Charles M. Segal and David C. Stineback, Puritans, Indians and Manifest Destiny (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), p.16.

In a farewell sermon to John Winthrop's group in 1630, John Cotton explained the three ways in which God had, in the past, made room for His people. Firstly, He had supported His people in lawful wars with the inhabitants, as in Psalm 44:2: "Thou didst drive out the heathen before them." Secondly, He had enabled them to obtain land by purchase (in the way that Abraham got the field of Machpelah) or by gift (as the sons of Jacob gained the land of Goshen from Pharaoh). His third method was to clear a space for them by making "a country though not altogether void of inhabitants, yet void in that place where they reside".[2]

God had already used the third method in the plague of 1616-17, which had killed thousands of New England Indians, and it was hoped that thereafter He would choose the second method, as the Puritans had no desire to fight the Indians. Rather, they wished to convert them to Christianity. In common with post-Reformation Europeans of all denominations, the Puritans did not consider religion to be a matter for the individual conscience to decide.[3] Christianity was the only true religion, and, like missionaries before and since, the Puritans considered it their Christian duty to bring the natives they encountered to Christ. Indeed, this was to be their primary task under the terms of their charter from King Charles 1.[4] Additional reason for converting the Indians was found in the common belief that they were descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel and, as such, had to be brought back to God.[5] In accordance with this belief, the first Puritans did not believe that the Indians were racially different to themselves. Evidence for this was found in the fact that while exposure to the sun and the frequent

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2. John Cotton, "God's Promise to His Plantations," in ibid., p.53.

3. Perry Miller, "The Religious Impulse in the Founding of Virginia: Religion and Society in the Early Literature," The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 5, No.4 (1948), 498.

4. David C. Stineback, "The Status of Puritan-Indian Scholarship," The New England Quarterly, 51, No.1 (1978), 83.

5. Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), pp.19-20.

application of stains made the skins of the adult Indians dark, they were light-skinned at birth.[6] Therefore to the Puritans the Indian was not inherently inferior but merely culturally inferior, and once he had accepted the Gospel he would be equal to his European benefactors.

Finding survival in the wilderness more difficult than they had anticipated, the Puritans found little time for converting natives in the first two decades. Also, contrary to expectations, the Indians did not sense their own spiritual and moral inferiority to the Puritans and seek to emulate them.[7] While, in this respect, one cannot deny that the Puritans were so convinced of their own superiority and position as God's chosen people that they wrongly failed to recognize any merit in the cultures or laws of the Indian tribes, it must be pointed out that such a view is not altogether foreign to the thinking of present-day white Americans. Few, one suspects, would consider Indian culture equal to that of European origin. (The same might be said of the attitudes of white New Zealanders to Maori culture and of white Australians to Aboriginal culture.)

When the anticipated changes did not take place in the Indians, it is hardly surprising that a certain amount of paranoia gripped the Puritans: finding themselves in a strange land and surrounded by heathen who were also a potential threat to their safety, their anxiety to put down any Indian uprising before it got out of hand is quite understandable. Such an occasion arose in 1637, - the Pequot War. The problem with the Pequots began in 1634, when Captains John Stone and Walter Norton, along with their crew of seven men, were slain by Pequots. Immediate retaliation did not follow, however, as the Puritans accepted the Pequots' statement that Stone had kidnapped two of their number. A treaty was made with the Pequots, and despite the fact that the Pequots failed to live up to it[8] peace was maintained until 1636. However, after a series

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6. Ibid., pp.20, 42 and 359.

7. Stineback, p.84.

8. Vaughan, p.126. But cf. Jennings, The Invasion of America, which concludes from "textual analysis" (p.191) of Puritan writings that the Puritans broke the treaty rather than the Indians.

of atrocities in the Connecticut Valley and Puritan retaliations which resulted in more property damage than loss of life, it became obvious that "to do nothing was to invite annihilation",[9] a fact which became more obvious after a massacre at Wethersfield on the 23rd of April, 1637. The Pequots planned a further assault on the 25th of May, but this was prevented when the Puritans and some Indian Allies attacked their fort on the Mystic River and killed several hundred of them. After this decisive battle the remaining Pequots were defeated with little effort. It would be unreasonable to deduce from the severity with which the Pequots were destroyed that the Puritans had, by 1637, come to view the Indians as a different race, as the war was not a racial conflict. Most of the New England tribes were on the side of the Puritans. Further evidence that the Puritans still regarded the Indians as belonging to the same race as themselves is found in the records of the General Court. While, in line with the general current of 17th-century European thought, the Puritans believed that their laws, derived from the Bible and English experience, should prevail over uncivilized and un-Christian native customs, that the administration of the law was their responsibility, and that, as agents of the mother country, they were in authority over everyone within their colony's patent, it is evident that they made every effort to ensure that justice was administered impartially for white and red man alike. This would seem to be borne out by the frequency with which Indians took their grievances to Puritan courts, sometimes even in cases involving no whites. One example of Puritan impartiality was the case involving the Wongunk tribe which, with the Pequots, was responsible for one of the attrocities leading to the Pequot War - the above-mentioned massacre of nine settlers and destruction of property at Wethersfield, Connecticut. The reason given was that the tribe had sold land to the settlers on condition that they be allowed to remain on it and receive protection from the English against the Pequots, and that the settlers had broken the agreement and expelled

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9. Vaughan, p.133.

the chief when he set up a wigwam at Wethersfield. The General Court ruled that Sequin, the chief, had been justified in retaliating as he had because the settlers had committed the first offence.[10]

From the Pequot War of 1636-7 until the onset of King Philip's War in 1675 the Puritans and Indians shared an almost unbroken peace. However, as the Puritans grew in power, Philip felt his own power declining. The Puritans now outnumbered the Indians, and most of the Indians had, at least in part, adopted the Puritan religion and life-style.[11] Indeed, it was observed at the time that their fondness of Puritan clothes sometimes caused them to be mistaken for Puritans from a distance. While Philip enlisted the Narragansetts, Nipmucs, and Pocumtucks to his cause, this war, like the earlier one, was not a race war as other tribes such as the Mohegans, the Massachusetts, the Nausets, and even the Pequots, sided with the Puritans. Nevertheless, with the advent of this war, some of the Puritans began to think in racial terms, and sometimes mistreated friendly Indians, although such actions were not sanctioned by the Puritan leaders, who strove to see the Indians treated fairly.

Other factors which probably contributed to racist feelings on the part of Puritans were the Indians' fondness of alcohol and violation of the Protestant Work Ethic. Once they had been introduced to alcohol by the Europeans, the Indians became extremely fond of it; and the intemperence of some, exaggerated by their previous unfamiliarity with it and consequent inability to control their desire for it, coupled with genetic factors,[12] shocked fellow Indians and Puritans alike. Although all of the New England colonies created legislation to prevent the sale of alcohol to the Indians, it was largely ineffective, especially after the Indians learned how to make their own brandy and cider.[13]

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10. Ibid., pp.185-210.

11. Ibid., p.312.

12. Medical Tribune, 14, No.36 (1973), p.32 reports a study which showed that Indians are "significantly slower at metabolizing" alcohol than Europeans.

13. Vaughan, p.46.

During King Philip's War white soldiers found their Indian allies worthy companions in battle and welcomed them as drinking companions, with the result that "drunkenness increased and quarrelling and fighting and more, the sad effects of strong drink".[14]

While in such activities as fishing, hunting and war the Indians displayed rather more energy than the Puritans, they were either unwilling or unable to display enough sustained effort to furnish themselves with the surplus that would enable them to improve their standard of living, "bring further educational opportunities, and insure them a more integral role in the white man's society".[15] This repeated failure to observe the work ethic and improve themselves and their station by unceasing hard work must have caused the Puritans to wonder if these men were really of the same stock as themselves.

After King Philip was defeated in 1676, the Puritans embarked upon a new Indian policy whereby the New England tribes were put onto what remained of their tribal land and surrounded by English communities. They were, in effect, put on to reservations,

Another result of King Philip's War was the advent of the captivity narrative - an early form of American literature[16] in which people who had been captured by Indians described their experiences. The first to be published in North America was that of Mary Rowlandson, who was captured by King Philip's braves in February, 1676, and freed about three months later.

The North American captivity narratives of the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries were primarily religious documents, as their titles frequently suggest.

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14. John Eliot, Roxbury Records, quoted in Vaughan, p.321.

15. Vaughan, p.306.

16. The captivity narrative was not invented by the Puritans. Four such accounts from the Sixteenth Century are extant, and the accounts of men captured by Indians had been included in other works, notably John Smith's General History of Virginia (1624). For further details see Richard VanDerBeets, introduction to Held Captive by Indians: Selected Captivity Narratives 1642-1836, ed., Richard VanDerBeets (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1973), especially p.xii. All quotes from captivity narratives will be from this volume.

Mary Rowlandson's, for example, is entitled "The Soveraignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson." Others were "God's Protecting Providence Man's Surest Help in the Times of the Greatest Difficulty and Most Imminent Danger" (1699) by Jonathan Dickenson, and "The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion" (1707) by John Williams. The authors of these narratives describe how God caused them to fall into the hands of "barbarous heathens" (Rowlandson, p.64) and caused them to suffer as a test or punishment. Their sufferings, they recognize, are far less than they deserve, and, in Mary Rowlandson's case at least, lead to a greater understanding of Scripture (p.70), from which apposite passages are often quoted. A major function of these works was to enable others to benefit from the experiences of their authors. For example, Mary Rowlandson states that "one principall ground of my setting forth these Lines" is, "even as the Psalmist sayes, To declare the Works of the Lord, and his wonderfull Power in carrying us along, preserving us in the Wilderness, while under the Enemies hand, and returning us in safety again" (p.57). Likewise, John Gyles states that his narrative (first published in 1736) was written in order that his family "might have a memento ever ready at hand, to excite in ourselves gratitude and thankfulness to God; and in our offspring a due sense of their dependence on the Sovereign of the universe, from the precariousness and vicissitudes of all sublunary enjoyments" (p.92). While, in these narratives, there is little suggestion that the Indians are racially inferior,[17] their actions make it clear to the writers that they are being used by the Devil: Mary Rowlandson, for example, states that "there was little more trust to them then (sic.) to the master they served" (p.75).

17. Some writers, however, were evidently not convinced that the Indians belonged to the same race as themselves. Abraham Panther, for exampler, in 1798 published a captivity narrative about a young woman who was captured and saw "no human being for the space of 9 years". Charles Evans, American Bibliography (1903:rpt.New York: Peter Smith, 1941), XII, 146.

Whether or not the Puritans considered, by the end of the Seventeenth Century, that the Indians were racially inferior, King Philip's War and, perhaps, to a lesser degree, the captivity narratives already published and which described numerous atrocities and indignities inflicted on the Puritans by the Indians, had caused considerable ill-feeling towards the Indians, and this had been compounded, from 1688 on, by French attempts to gain control of America, first by Jesuit priests working amongst the Indians, and later by force with the help of some of the Indian tribes. This animosity was reflected in the captivity narratives of the early and mid-eighteenth century, such as "A Narrative of the Sufferings and Surprizing Deliverances of William and Elizabeth Fleming... Wherein it Fully Appears, That the Barbarities of the Indians is Owing to the French, and Chiefly their Priests" (1756) and "French and Indian Cruelty Exemplified in the Life and Various Vicissitudes of Fortune of Peter Williamson"(1757).

As anti-French sentiment grew, the Indians in the captivity narratives ceased to be perceived as God's agents of punishment via the Devil, and became agents of the French in the war between Protestantism and Catholic heresy. With the end of France's threat, the Indians became, in the period of the Revolution, the agents of the English. Indeed, the Declaration of Independence states that one of Britain's "repeated injuries" was her effort "to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions".[18] This was done by means of guarantees that under British rule, Indian territory, rights, and trade would be preserved.[19] When many of the Indians succumbed to the urgings of silver-tongued British orators, they sealed their own fate and that of all the tribes, for the colonists then saw the Indians as a force that would have to be dealt with once and for all after the British had been driven out of America. If earlier writers of captivity narratives had not exaggerated Indian

18. "The Declaration of Independence," quoted in VanDerBeets, p.xix.

19. Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1953), p.53.

barbarity, writers during the revolutionary period certainly did, one example being an "Account of the Dreadful Devastation of the Wyoming Settlements, in July 1778", which states that after Colonel Nathan Dennison surrendered to British Colonel Zeb. Butler and his Indian allies, most of the inhabitants at Dennison's fort were burnt alive by their captors, a statement that is not supported by the accounts of any of the Americans present. Indeed, it was, according to Richard VanDerBeets, "one of the few instances in which Indians at war had even been kept under approximate control".[20]

Such exaggerations paved the way for the captivity narratives of the late Eighteenth Century and the early Nineteenth Century, the writers of which were more concerned with making a profit than presenting accurate accounts. By this time, the narratives were by no means an exclusively Puritan form of literature. Although the work ethic of the Puritans made the quest for profit respectable, in accordance with the Ninth Commandment,[21] they displayed some degree of respect for the truth. Others, however, had no such scruples, and it was a short step from the emphasis on Indian brutality in the interests of propaganda to a further emphasis for the purpose of titillation and sensation, "from promoting hatred to eliciting horror, from inspiring patriotism to encouraging sales, from chauvinism to commercialism".[22] During this period the narratives went through three overlapping stages. Firstly, attempts were made to improve their literary value; secondly, they became sensationalized, striving for horrific effect; and thirdly, when the facts did not prove horrific enough they were exaggerated and fictionalized, often by opportunistic journalists who "edited" actual accounts for publication.

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20. VanDerBeets, p.240. On page 97 he mentions a number of incidents in the French and Indian wars in which Indians had not been controlled in similar situations and had committed atrocities.

21. Exodus 20:16: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." To the Puritans their neighbours included the Indians.

22. VanDerBeets, p.xx.

One narrative from this period is the "Affecting History of the Dreadful Distresses of Frederick Manheim's Family" (1793), in which Manheim's twin daughters are stripped and "pitched...from their knees to their shoulders, with upwards of six hundred...sharpened splinters", whereupon the splinters are set alight (p.205). Others are "An Effective Narrative of the Captivity and Suffering of Mrs. Mary Smith" (1818) and "An Affecting Account of the Tragical Death of Major Swan, and the Captivity of Mrs. Swan and Infant Child" (1815).

During the period in which the captivity narratives were written, Puritan control of New England politics was lost. However, the Puritan view of "themselves as divinely appointed users of the earth for the good of all mankind"[23] was also held by those who became the dominant figures, such as Thomas Jefferson and his followers. Like the Puritans, the Jeffersonians considered "the Indian to be in body and mind equal to the whiteman."[24] Also like the Puritans, they believed that once the Indians found themselves in the company of whites, they would automatically adopt the white man's way of life. Nevertheless, while Jefferson believed that nature provided the means for its own improvement, and that as there was nothing incongruous in nature thus would the Indian become assimilated into white society, he did not believe in coercion. Jeffersonian thinkers believed that assimilation was in the best interests of the Indians, and when the anticipated changes did not take place in the Indians, they had no explanation. Such an explanation followed in due course, along with feelings of animosity towards the Indians. The latter, kindled for those with no personal experience of the Indians by the captivity narratives, was fanned by a new literary development - the frontier romance.

The frontier romance was the result of a desire for a national literature in the wake of the Revolution and the War of 1812. In 1801, Charles Brockden Brown had stated

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23. Segal and Stineback, p.220.

24. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to the Marquis de Chastellux (1785), in The Indian and the White Man, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), p.424.

that Indian hostility and the perils of the wilderness were more suitable subjects for American literature than the puerile "superstitution and exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras"[25] of European literature. Such a literature, it was felt, should depict the colonists triumphing over their enemies - the British, the French, and the Indians - all of whom were obstacles in their attempts to settle the land God had provided for them. Thus, the primary function of Indians in the frontier romance was to be killed by whites.

Sir Walter Scott's Waverly novels provided an adaptable pattern[26] and this, along with the popularity of "Yamoyden", James W. Eastburn's and Robert Sands' poem about King Philip's War, led to the first wave of frontier romances, which used similar subject matter to "Yamoyden" in historical romances somewhat akin to the Waverly novels. There was, however, one major problem: there was considerable doubt about the Indian's value as subject matter. One writer suggested that

> The Indian has a lofty and commanding spirit, but its deeply marked traits are few, stern, and uniform, never running into those delicate and innumerable shades, which are spread over the surface of civilised society, giving the fullest scope to poetic invention, and opening a store of incidents inexhaustible, and obedient to the call of fancy.[27]

Others felt that the Indian's primitive way of life lacked interesting activities, and that repeated descriptions of the activities with which he filled his days would become boring. For example, a reviewer of James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans (1826) asked, "How many novels can he afford to write? How many changes can he ring upon scalping, shooting, tomahawking, etc.?"[28] While novelists were generally inclined to agree, a nationalist form of literature could hardly omit the native inhabitants from

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25. Charles Brockden Brown, preface to Edgar Huntley (1801: rpt. New York: Macmillan Co., 1928), p.xxiii.

26. Louise K. Barnett, The Ignoble Savage: American Literary Racism, 1790-1890 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), p.23.

27. Anonymous reviewer of "Escalala", a poem about Indians, quoted in Barnett, p.25.

28. United States Literary Gazette, 1826. Quoted in ibid., p.25.

whom its white heroes had won the land. Lacking both a knowledge of Indians and the inclination to gain such a knowledge, whites adopted stereotypes, of which there were three basic ones - the bad Indian, the noble savage, and the good Indian.

It was the bad Indian stereotype who contributed to the racist feelings of white Americans. As we have seen, the Puritans were inclined to see the Indians as ordinary men sometimes under the influence of the Devil. As others took over the genre a greater emphasis was placed on Indian brutality. With the advent of the frontier romance this was further exaggerated into the bad Indian stereotype - a superstitutious, vengeful and treacherous character who practised a barbaric kind of warfare. This exaggeration was partly due to a feeling that the colonists had lacked an enemy comparable to the great armies of Europe. To compensate, the Indians were made "to excel in gruesome accomplishment".[29] No proper motive was needed for the bad Indian to attack a white man: Joseph C. Hart states, in Miriam Coffin (1834), that for "an imaginary injury done to his remote ancestor, and handed down to him by tradition, he will wreak vengeance upon some innocent descendant of the wrong-doer, even to the fourth generation".[30]

The noble savage came from an older source - a long-held European view that uncivilized people lived a happier and freer life unhampered by the trappings of civilization. Jean Jacques Rousseau, after reading of travellers' encounters with American Indians and observing some brought to Europe, suggested, in 1755, that

> The Example of the Savages, most of whom have been found in this Condition, seems to confirm that Mankind was formed ever to remain in it, that this Condition is the real Youth of the World, and that all ulterior Improvements have been so many Steps, in Appearance towards the Perfection of Individuals, but in Fact towards the Decrepitness of the Species.[31]

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29. Ibid., p.35.
30. Joseph C. Hart, Miriam Coffin, quoted in ibid., p.85.
31. Jean Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse upon the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality among Mankind," in Washburn, p.418.

While Rousseau did not invent the noble savage, others used his observations as the basis for such a character. Like Adam in the Garden of Eden, the noble savage lacked a concept of sin. He also lacked the facades which civilization imposes on its members. Non-acquisitive, and valuing only freedom, he performed good deeds then went his way without seeking any reward.[32]

During the Eighteenth Century, writers in American literary periodicals used the character of the noble savage to criticize society in order to make white Americans live up to their civilized nature. For example, in the "Letter from an Indian Chief to his Friend in the state of New York", which appeared in the American Museum in 1789, the "chief" urges the reader to "Cease to call other nations savage, while you are tenfold more the children of cruelty, than they."[33] As Americans, prompted by such writings, began to have guilt feelings about the treatment accorded to the Indians, the noble savage appeared in the writings of Benjamin Franklin and others, and was sometimes adopted in the frontier romance, generally as an Indian not yet corrupted by contact with whites, as in James Birchett Ransom's Osceola (1838), or as one who sides with the white hero, as in James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales, which contrast noble Delawares and Pawnees with bad Hurons and Sioux.

The good Indian in the frontier romance is an individual cut off from his or her (frequently the good Indian is a woman) own people and who has adopted white values and loyalties.[34] Having to some extent rejected their own way of life, good Indians are "isolates, without family or tribal ties and, however civilized, are unable to convert other Indians...Ultimately, civilization meant death, even to fictive Indians."[35] The primary function of the good Indian was to save his/her white friend from bad Indians as in The Christian Indian (anonymous, 1825),

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32. Irwin R. Blacker, preface to The Old West in Fiction, ed. Irwin R. Blacker (New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc., 1961), pp.xii-xiii.

33. American Museum, 1789, quoted in Pearce, p.157.

34. Barnett, p.90.

35. Ibid., pp.92-93.

in which the good Indian Miona dies to purchase her white beloved's freedom from an Indian curse.[36] Another useful function of the good Indian was to serve as "the buffer off whom the hero bounces his ideas."[37] This stereotype owed its existence to the historical presence of faithful Indian allies such as Squanto, who proved invaluable to the Pilgrims at New Plymouth in the Seventeenth Century, and owed not a little to the popular story of John Smith's rescue from execution by Pocahontas.

A number of characteristics were shared by all three stereotypes, notably fine physiques, proficiency in wilderness skills, stoicism, and the use of figurative speech.[38] The fine physiques of fictive Indians are the result of actual observation - that of early explorers and more recent writers on the subject, such as Robert Beverley, who wrote, in 1705, that "They are straight and well proportion'd, having the cleanest and most exact Limbs in the World: They are so perfect in their outward frame that I never heard of one single *Indian*, that was either dwarfish, crooked, bandy-legg'd, or otherwise mis-shapen."[39]

It could hardly be denied that the Indian was skilled at the activities essential to living in the wilderness, as he could not have survived otherwise. However, the Indian in the frontier romance could be outperformed in wilderness skills by the white hero. Cooper, for example, writes of Natty Bumppo when he is pursued by Hurons in The Deerslayer, "As is generally the case with the vigorous border-men, he could outrun any single Indian among his pursuers..."[40] This was part of a viewpoint which accepted that as the whites had vanquished the Indians, they must be superior in every way. Hence, in the frontier romance, whites were superior in wilderness skills, more sexually attractive (the Indian's complexion failed him/her if nothing else did), and morally superior or, in the case of villains, exceeding the Indian in perfidy.

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36. Ibid., p.94.

37. Blacker, p.xvi.

38. Barnett, p.75.

39. Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia, ed. Louis B. Wright (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p.159.

40. James Fenimore Cooper, The Deerslayer (1841: rpt. London: J.M. Dent and Co., undated), p.470 (chapter 27).

Indian stoicism "ranges from a habitual failure to register facial expression to control over all forms of physical reaction during moments of intense stress."[41] Both, it seems likely, had some basis in observation. Indian failure to register facial expression has frequently been commented on. For example, Paul Radin, writing about the Winnebago, observed that they tried not to exhibit their emotions because it was considered a sign of effeminacy and because it laid one open to ridicule.[42] Indian failure to register facial expression later proved a problem for film-makers using Indian actors. Indian control over his reactions was observed as early as 1643 by Father Isaac Jogues, who watched a Christian Indian names Ahatusari maintain his dignity while some Mohawks "cut off both his thumbs, and, through the stump of his left, with savage cruelty,..drove a sharp stake to his very elbow."[43] Thus, whether or not stoicism was a general characteristic of Indians, this aspect of the stereotypes was not entirely lacking in a factual basis.

A similar, if somewhat shaker, claim may be made for the metaphoric language given to literary Indians. It was a compromise between the grammatical utterances of Powhatan, which were presumably translations of statements made in his own language and translated into Seventeenth Century English[44] and the metaphoric pidgin English quoted in Nathaniel Saltonstall's The Present State of New-England With Respect To The Indian War (1675). Lack of English vocabulary, one might suggest, caused Indians to create metaphors in order to express themselves using the words at their command, and later writers, in seeking a satisfactory fictive language, adopted the use of metaphors as they considered it the most accurate way of conveying Indian thought patterns while, at the same time, they reduced the accent, bad grammar, and lack of verbal facility of Indian speech as recorded by Saltonstall.

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41. Barnett, p.76.

42. Paul Radin, The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian (1920: rpt. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), p.45.

43. Isaac Jogues, "Captivity of Father Isaac Jogues, of the Society of Jesus, Among the Mohawks" in VanDerBeets, p.12.

44. Barnett, p.78.

While, by the late Eighteenth Century, scholars like Benjamin Franklin had begun to see that the Indian had been wronged, it was too late to change his perceived role in the nation's history. To do so would have been to challenge such sacred notions as "the inevitability of an advanced people supplanting a primitive one, the appropriateness of a Christian supplanting a heathen society, and the greatness of the country's pioneer forebears."[45] Any writer who expressed sympathy for the Indians at the expense of the whites suffered at the hands of the critics. Indeed, "Yamoyden", the poem to which the development of the frontier romance owed a great deal, was criticised for representing "the settlers as entirely in the wrong, and the Indians as wholly in the right".[46] This criticism, it would seem, was taken to heart by the writers of frontier romances as much as the poem itself was. History, too, could not be denied: whites had proven themselves able to defeat Indians (albeit by virtue of superior weapons and greater manpower more than anything else), and white Americans found it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid harbouring feelings of superiority.

While initially these feelings of superiority were derived from the notion that the Indians were only culturally inferior, the explanation for their failure to assimilate - the question that had baffled the Jeffersonians - eventually came in the form of the concept of "polygenesis", which held that God had created the various races separately, and that the races were not equal. While aspersions had occasionally been cast on the humanity of the Indians in the captivity narratives and by writers like Hugh Henry Brackenridge, and while Bernard Romans had suggested in 1775 that the Indians were "so much unnatural men that they must have been separately created",[47] such a view did not begin to gain widespread acceptance until the 1830s. Most influential in this respect was an article by Lewis Cass in

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45. Ibid., p.38.

46. John G. Palfrey, North American Review, 12, p.485, quoted in Barnett, p.27.

47. Pearce, p.47.

the liberal North American Review (1830) which argued that Jefferson's hope of assimilation was doomed to failure because of an "inherent difficulty" arising from Indian "character".[48] Cass, who soon found himself in President Andrew Jackson's Cabinet, was an influential figure, and it was not long before his views were adopted as government policy: in 1835 Jackson stated, in his Seventh Annual Message to Congress, that all "preceding experiments for the improvement of the Indians have failed. It seems now to be an established fact that they can not live in contact with a civilized community and prosper."[49] His solution was to remove most of the Indians to the West. Under the terms of a treaty, the Indians gave up their eastern lands and were given $5,000,000 for removal expenses, plus land west of the Mississippi (Oklahoma).

On their new lands the Five Civilized Tribes (Creeks, Chicasaws, Cherokees, Choctaws and Seminoles), as they were known, frequently found themselves in conflict with the plains Indians, who felt that their territory had been invaded, and with miners and settlers who constantly trespassed on Indian land. Matters became worse when troops were removed from the frontier and Indian Territory at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861: without any soldiers to intervene, apart from Indian-hating volunteers, the Indians found themselves bullied and maltreated by local whites.[50] In 1862, the Santee Sioux took up arms against the whites. As most of the Union troops were involved in the Civil War, not a great deal could be done immediately. The situation became worse still as a result of Colonel John M. Chvington's massacre of Cheyennes and Arapahoes at Sand Creek in 1864,

When the Union troops were removed from the Indian Territory, the Indians were left at the mercy of Confederate troops. Also, the Union ceased to pay the Indians' annuities. The Confederacy's promise to pay them, and the persuasions of many Southern sympathizing Indian agents won

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48. Segal and Stineback, p.221.

49. Andrew Jackson, "Seventh Annual Message to Congress," in Documents of American History, ed. Henry Steele Commager (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1949) I, 266.

50. James Wilson, The Original Americans: U.S. Indians (London: Minority Rights Group, 1976), p.17.

over many Indians to the Confederate cause. Some tribes were split, particularly the Creeks and the Cherokees, with both the Union and the Confederacy gaining Indian troops.

After the war, those tribes which had cupported the Confederacy were punished by having lands taken from them. These lands were given to Indians removed from Kansas.

With the Civil War over, more attention could be paid to the problem of subduing the Indians. The post-war economy required gold, which had to be transported from the West. Indians could not be allowed to prevent this, so permanent army posts were set up. In the Southwest, Cochise held his own against General Oliver O. Howard's troops until Howard and Tom Jeffords made peace with him. This peace with the Apaches lasted until Geronomo and his renegade followers took up arms again in 1881 and finally surrendered in 1886. Also in the Southwest, Kit Carson fought the Navajos. In the North West the Nez Percés had to be subjugated.

During this period, much public ill-feeling towards the Indians developed, and justification for their treatment was conveniently found in Darwinism. In 1852, Herbert Spencer had suggested that progress in human society had resulted from the survival of those possessing the most intelligence, skill, and self-control.

Charles Darwin, in "The Origin of Species" (1859) had extended this to the entire animal world. A number of Americans, of whom William Graham Sumner was the most influential, took up Darwin's views, and from 1870 Darwinism was an important current in American thought. Those who wished to use it to justify the subjugation of weaker races, such as the Indians, could point to the subtitle of The Origin of Species, which referred to "The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life", ignoring the fact that Darwin was not talking about men. By the late Nineteenth Century, much of the world was dominated by Anglo-Saxons, and for those who could reconcile Darwinism with their religious beliefs, it indicated that this was part of God's plan.

The peak of public ill-feeling towards the Indians was reached in 1876. In 1874, the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of Dakota, a sacred ground of the Sioux, had started a chain of events leading ultimately to General Custer's defeat at Little Bighorn by Sioux warriors led by Gall, Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull in June, 1876. Eastern newspaper reports of the battle increased public hatred of the Indians, and readers were gratified to hear of actions taken against them.

The tide, however, was turning. To some, the reprisals against the Indians seemed rather harsh. Others realized that the Indians had suffered many injustices at the hands of white Americans. One such person was Helen Hunt Jackson, who believed that "the American people, as a people, are not at heart unjust",[51] and attempted to rectify the impressions created by newspapers and novelists by outlining the hardships suffered by seven of the largest tribes in A Century of Dishonor (1881). This book was very influential, and caused one of its readers, Herbert Walsh, to form the Indian Rights Association in 1882. In 1883 it gained a sister organization, the Women's National Indian Association, and in 1885 the National Indian Defense Association was formed.[52] All three sought citizenship for the Indians.

Another person to take up the cause of justice and citizenship for the Indians was Senator Dawes, who saw three basic obstacles to be overcome before assimilation could take place. These were communal ownership of property, chieftanship, and Indian religions. The first of these problems, communal ownership of property, was tackled by means of a bill which was passed and became known as the Dawes Act (1887). This act allotted land to individual Indians, After twenty-five years, by which time he should have grown into his responsibilities, each Indian was to gain the title to his land, along with citizenship. Whatever land was left over was to be sold to whites, and the proceeds used to help civilize the Indians. As the Indian was expected to be able to use the land to support himself,

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51. Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor (1881: rpt. Minneapolis:Ross and Haines, Inc., 1964), p.7.

52. Dwight W. Hoover, The Red and The Black (Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Co., 1976), p.150.

payments from the government ceased. However the Indians, apart from the Pueblos, were unaccustomed to agriculture and did not do well at it.

Predatory whites were quick to gather round. Loopholes in the Dawes Act, as well as Indian ignorance of the law and economics, made it easy for whites to gain Indian land through fraud and trickery. Some Indians were persuaded to will their land to white "friends" then murdered.

The lands went in order of merit, starting with the best. Eventually the Indians had only 56,000,000 of the original 138,000,000, and all of it was considered by soil conservationists to be eroded. The Indian birth rate rose during this period, and the result was more and more Indians on less and less land.

In the destruction of chieftanship the government was more successful. By dealing with tribal councils rather than chiefs, the whites ultimately undermined the power of the chiefs, leaving a gap to be filled by men often less concerned with Indian welfare than the chiefs had been.

Indian religion held its own against the onslaughts of the reformers, though Christian elements pervaded new cults, such as the Native American Church.

While the adult Indians were considered by many to be beyond "saving", the children were not. Richard Henry Pratt initiated schools for them. The children were kept from their families for eight years (usually), at the end of which they were equipped neither for life in a white man's world, nor reservation life.

In the wave of public sympathy following the publication of A Century of Dishonor and its follow-up, Ramona, the Indians no longer made ideal stock villains, and largely disappeared from the literature of the late Nineteenth Century, and they were virtually forgotten by all but anthropologists, ethnologists, and a new invention - the cinema.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF THE CINEMA AND ITS AFTERMATH: 1889 TO 1939

The first films were vignettes shown in penny arcade peep shows, and made their first appearance in 1889. During the 1890s Indians were frequently seen in such films as "Indian War Council" (1894), "Sioux Ghost Dance" (1894)[1], "Serving Rations to the Indians" (1898), "Parade of Buffalo Bill's Wild West" (1898), "Eagle Dance" (1898), "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Parade" (1901), "Moki Snake Dance by Wolpi Indians" (1901), "Sham Battle at the Pan-American Exposition" (1901), and "Club Swinging, Carlisle Indian School" (1902).[2] These films were of a documentary nature, and the question of how to portray the Indians in a drama did not arise until 1903, when Edwin S. Porter's "The Great Train Robbery" heralded the start of narrative films.

A number of factors governed the portrayal of Indians in the early days of the cinema, not the least of which was the nature of the men who made the films. While Thomas Edison, who saw the cinema as his own brainchild, tried to control the industry, he was not able to do so for long: a host of small-time operators defeated his efforts and came to dominate the industry. These men were nearly all immigrants or the sons of Jewish immigrants who came from Europe in the late nineteenth century, and included Louis B. Mayer, William Fox, Adolph Zukor, Harry Warner, Carl Laemmle, and Samuel Goldwyn. Six of the eight major companies were founded by such men, and Jews also played major roles in the development of the other two.[3] If

1. Ralph and Natasha Friar state, in The Only Good Indian... The Hollywood Gospel (New York: Drama Book Specialists/ Publishers, 1972, p.70) that "motion picture ballyhoo" dates from this film as there is no evidence that it showed the real Ghost Dance. However, as they offer no evidence that it was not, we must view this statement with some suspicion.

2. Ibid., pp.69-70 and 77.

3. Philip French, The Movie Moguls (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1971), pp.36-7.

nineteenth-century American authors knew nothing about real Indians, it is unreasonable to expect that foreigners would know more. However, Indians had proven popular subjects for the vignettes, sometimes in filmed excerpts from wild west shows, so it is not surprising that Indian films continued to be made. Nor is it surprising that initially the Wild West Shows proved to be the major influence on their portrayal.

One of the earliest Wild West Shows was staged in 1876 by John P. Clum, the former agent of the San Carlos Apaches. His aim was "to permit the...East to see for itself that Apaches were human".[4] The show included such items as an Indian council of war (in the Apache language), squaws engaged in domestic labour, and social games - "Indian Modes & Customs Never before so faithfully set forth."[5] The most popular parts of the show, however, were those in which the Apaches were defeated by whites. Not surprisingly, future shows, such as "Cody's Wild West", tended to emphasise this aspect. Film-makers, too, found skirmishes between cowboys and Indians eminently suitable subjects for their narrative films since the limitations of the cameras in use at the time made it necessary to film as much as possible outdoors. Thus the bad Indian stereotype found its way onto the screen in such films as "Kit Carson" (1903), "Rescue of Child From Indians" (1903), "Brush Between Cowboys and Indians" (1904), "Cowboy Justice" (1904), "Cowboy's Narrow Escape" (1904), "Indian Revenge" (1905), "Attack on Fort Boonesboro" (1906) and "The Indian's Revenge" (1906). While the portrayal of Indians from 1903 to 1907 was based on Wild West Show clichés, there was little reason for film-makers to suspect that Indians would find them offensive, for although some of the Indians who performed in the shows and films may have done so purely because they considered it a preferable alternative to the drudgery of farming on a reservation, (with others it quickly became a family tradition), it must be borne in mind that the shows were performed with the co-operation

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4. John P. Clum, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.57.

5. Poster reproduced in Friar and Friar, p.58.

of not just any Indians, but such prominent leaders as Sitting Bull, Geronimo, Red Cloud, Chief Joseph, Rain-in-the-Face, Quanah, and Hollow Horn Bear. Film-makers might be forgiven for thinking that such men would not appear in productions which misrepresented their races.

In 1908 there was a marked increase in the number of films about Indians, about thirty being made. With this increase in the number of films being made, the need was felt for a wider range of subject matter. As the film-makers were not scholars, and as the idea of research had not yet surfaced,[6] the bases of the scenarios were not the scholarly works of anthropologists and ethnologists, but rather popular fiction. Thus film-makers looked into the nation's literary classics and found the noble savage and the good Indian. Accordingly, to give an example of each, "The Justice of the Redskin" (1908) had a noble savage accused of murder displaying his primitive sense of justice by tracking down the real killer and dispensing justice in his own way rather than handling him over to the authorities and clearing his own name, and "The Red Girl" (1908) had an Indian girl helping a white girl to recover gold stolen by the Indian girl's husband and a Mexican woman. Evidently the film-makers found the noble savage and the good Indian more appealing as subject-matter than the bad Indian, for the latter quickly became the least common of the three basic stereotypes. With the preponderance of Jewish immigrants in the film business, this is perhaps not surprising as these men possibly identified with the status of the Indians as outsiders not fitting into white society. Indeed, one might even suggest that some of the screen Indians were substitutes for Jews.[7]

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6. Scenarios were often written by newspapermen in their spare time and sold for $10 to $25. For such amounts writers were hardly likely to take a great deal of trouble in ensuring their accuracy, even if it had occurred to them to do so.

7. In the absence of the actual films for study this point cannot be argued. However, it is worth noting that "Tell Them Willie Boy is Here" (1969), which has been seen as an allegory for Jewish director Abraham Polonsky's black-listing (e.g. in Tom Milne's review in Sight and Sound, 39, No.2 {1970} , p.101), was a remake of a 1911 film entitled "The Curse of the Redman".

It was precisely because of this outsider status that Jewish immigrants entered the film business. They had come to America in search of opportunity, only to find that the doors to society and the established industries had closed with the growth of anti-sematism following the mass immigration of Jews from central Europe. Finding themselves forced to live in ghettoes, they worked hard to improve their standard of living, usually as salesmen. With the birth of the cinema they saw the chance to get into a new industry and grasped it with both hands. Considering the degree to which they "understood the techniques of salesmanship and how to apply them brashly and without inhibition",[8] one should not overlook the possibility that there was a degree of financial motivation in the use of the noble savage and the good Indian. By portraying the Indians in these ways, filmmakers were able to take advantage of the public feelings of guilt that tend to follow an effort to exterminate another race. A writer in "The Moving Picture World" likened the situation to that which existed in England after the Scottish Highlanders had ceased to be a threat, whereupon "the English went to the other extreme and could not seemingly go far enough in their admiration and fondness for highland history, highland customs and institutions". In the same way, now that the Indians had ceased to be dangerous, it was apparent that they had been "misjudged and slandered". The article went on:

> Now...the reaction has set in and it is surely a curious phase of the white man's civilization, that his latest invention is helping to set the red man right in history and in his position before the American people. All of the more artistic Indian films exalt the Indian, depict the noble traits in his character and challenge for him and his views and manner of life the belated admiration of his white brother. In fact this tendency to do the Indian justice runs through all the pictures.[9]

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8. French, p.40.

9. "The Vogue of Western and Military Drama", in The Moving Picture World, 9 (5 August 1911), 271.

However, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that every screen Indian fitted a literary stereotype, or that all of the film-makers were Jewish immigrants ignorant of Indian history and culture. Indeed, some film-makers, especially D.W. Griffith, made every effort to ensure that their films were as accurate as possible, with at least some degree of success.[10] Nevertheless, even if all of the film-makers had been experts on Indians, it is likely that the literary stereotypes would still have been used. As suggested above, the early film-makers were, for the most part, men seeking success. Obviously this was best done by producing a saleable product - one that catered to the demands and expectations of its audience. These men were not like composers, painters or writers who can work alone, in their leisure hours if necessary, and with relatively cheap materials produce works of art without having to take commercial considerations into account if they so wish. Film-making has been, from the start, an expensive group venture, and the primary consideration has always been to make a profit.[11]

While box-office takings have always given an indication of audience preferences and expectations, in the early years the chain of communication from viewer to film-maker was rather more direct than it has since become: if a film was applauded by nickelodeon patrons, the owner of the nickelodeon requested more like it from the distributor, and the distributor would pass the request on to the film-makers. Likewise, if the patrons disliked a film, their complaints would be passed on to the distributor and producer. Thus the types of films produced were largely dictated by the public.[12] In their efforts to cater to public taste, the film-makers evolved formulas and genres.

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10. John A. Price, "The Stereotyping of North American Indians in Motion Pictures," in Ethnohistory, 20 (1973), 155; Jack Temple Kirby, "D.W. Griffith's Racial Portraiture," in Phylon, 39 (1978), 122-123; Thomas Cripps, Slow Fade To Black (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.34.

11. D.J. Wenden, The Birth of the Movies (London: Macdonald, 1974), p.87.

12. Benjamin B. Hampton, History of the American Film Industry From Its Beginnings To 1931 (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), p.46.

In the 1909-10 period, the Western became the most popular type of film.[13] The first Western hero to emerge was Gilbert M. "Broncho Billy" Anderson, whose attitude is indicative of the cynicism about public taste which developed with the genres: in 1948 he observed that Western producers

> cater to the low mentality that wants nothing but excitement and doesn't care why the stagecoach goes over the cliff as long as it goes over... You can kill six Indians with one bullet, as long as you shoot them dead. The more impossible and incongruous westerns are, the more audiences like them.[14]

Coupled with this cynicism was a belief that people did not want their perceptions challenged by films or, in other words, that people did not wish to be made to think. This view was related to anti-intellectualism, an important current in American thought since at least the time of Andrew Jackson, the first "unschooled" American president.[15]

Anti-intellectualism in America developed largely from the nature of religion which has been dominant, and which is emotional rather than intellectual. This can be seen, for example, in the Puritan system whereby one could be certain that one belonged to the "elect" only after one had had a religious experience and had its validity approved by the congregation. Later this tendency manifested itself in a profusion of fundamentalist cults, which have been inclined to interpret the Bible as though it was originally written in English,[16] and which are suspicious of those who attempt to look beneath the surface of Biblical passages, preferring to take it all strictly at face value. As scientific thought, especially that of Darwin, challenged this view of the Bible in the nineteenth century, intellectuals were regarded with increasing

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13. Ibid., p.41.

14. Gilbert M. Anderson, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.83. (From Ezra Goodman, The Fifty Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood).

15. Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), p.159.

16. The writer recalls hearing a Seventh Day Adventist preacher explain away a passage that contradicted his argument by saying that while every word of the Bible was inspired by God, the punctuation was not, and a comma had been inserted in the wrong place.

suspicion. Another strain of thought contributing to anti-intellectualism was the view of primitivism that produced the noble savage stereotype, and which favours intuition over deliberation.

Having been formed by these factors, anti-intellectualism has been kept alive partly by some of the ideology surrounding the American Dream: books on how to achieve success stress the necessity of fast and decisive action. Napoleon Hill's Think and Grow Rich, for example, has a chapter entitled "DECISION: The Mastery of Procrastination" which states:

> Analysis of several hundred people who had accumulated fortunes, disclosed the fact that *every one of them* had the habit of REACHING DECISIONS PROMPTLY, and of changing these decisions SLOWLY, if and when they were changed.[17]

Those who stop and think, it would seem, are out of step with the mainstream of American thought and, as such, are treated with suspicion. Intelligence is highly regarded as a means of achieving a goal, but the intellect, which examines and criticizes etc., is not.[18]

While anti-intellectualism existed at the start of the twentieth century, however, it was not as strong as it was later to become, and while Hollywood employed few intellectuals,[19] attempts were made to explore issues, but generally without straying from established stereotypes. An issue frequently explored was that of miscegenation. To their credit, the film-makers preached a message that few would dispute today - that of separatism. Unfortunately, however, it was usually preached in tales about Indians wishing to marry whites and being rejected. Along with the literary stereotypes, Hollywood had inherited a literary ban on miscegenation, although on occasion whites did marry or at least produce offspring with Indians in films, as in "Heredity" (1912), in which a white trader buys a squaw and

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17. Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich (Marple, Cheshire: Psychology Publishing Co, Ltd., 1946), p.198.

18. Hofstadter, p.25. This is not a purely American phenomenon. It is equally true of New Zealand, for example. V. Jerome B. Elkind, "This Virus Stunts the Intellect", in The Star, 27 May 1981, p.13.

19. Wenden, p.51.

they have a son. Also, when Indians were rejected, they were sometimes portrayed as superior individuals to their white suitors, even if they were conventional "good Indians", as in "A Romance in the Western Hills" (1910), in which an Indian girl adopted by whites falls in love with the caddish nephew of her foster parents. When he rejects her on the grounds that he prefers to marry one of his own race, the girl returns to her tribe, and one of the braves from her tribe determines to avenge the insult, whereupon the Indian maiden proves herself a good Indian and intercedes on the white cad's behalf. A common type of plot involved an Indian (frequently a football hero) educated at Carlisle or a similar institution, and wishing to join white society and marry a white girl. While a white man could marry an Indian woman, white women could not marry Indian men, and the Indian heroes of these films would meet with rejection and eventually return to their tribes, as in "The Call of the Wild" (1908) and "A Football Warrior" (1908). At times it was preached rather brutally that an Indian could never become a white man, and that his attempts to do so could cause him to lose his identity as an Indian, as in "Curse of the Red Man" (1911), in which an Indian who has done well at the Sherman Institute for Indians is ostracised by his tribe. Finding his education useless in the face of Indian superstitution, he turns to drink. Eventually he kills a man and is himself killed after a long desert chase.

Ironically, since it was based on the true story of an Indian known as Willie Boy, "Curse of the Red Man" was the film that brought to a head the growing Indian dissatisfaction with Hollywood films. Since at least 1908, film reviewers had been critical of inaccuracies in films about Indians, and on the 17th of February, 1911, an Indian delegation went to Washington to complain to President Taft in an incident described in The Moving Picture World as an Indian "uprising".[20] The Indians, coming from a number of tribes, complained "that the moving picture promoters, in order to get thrilling pictures of wild western life, have

20. "Indians War On Films" in The Moving Picture World, 8 (18 March 1911), 581.

used white men costumed as Indians, in depicting scenes that are not true pictures of the Indians, and are in fact grossly libelous."[21] Further criticisms continued to appear, such as that of F. Lee, an Indian who objected to a film called "Robbie and the Redskins" (1911), in which five pioneers have no difficulty in driving off about a dozen Indians with guns.[22] Hollywood's predominantly sympathetic treatment up to 1911 indicated that the film-makers had no wish to offend them. How then, did they react to the Washington protest and the wave of criticism in trade magazines?

Some, it would seem, were unsure how to react: the number of films about Indians decreased from approximately 200 in 1911 to approximately 150 in 1912 and 100 in 1913. While the number increased to roughly 150 in 1914, the decline continued in 1915, when about 45 films concerning Indians were made, and in 1916, when there were less than 25.

Others reacted positively. Pathé Western attempted to make their Indian films more authentic by hiring James Young Deer, an Indian, as a director. He also wrote the screen-plays for his films, but they did not exhibit a remarkable improvement. For example, "The Squawman's Sweetheart" (1912) concerned a tribe seeking vengeance on a white hunter who has sent his Indian mistress back to them when his wife has come to join him. They capture the wife, but the hunter rescues her from the Indian camp and, unable to catch up with them, the Indians burn the hunter's cabin. "Red Man's Honor" (1912) was an all-Indian story, but had no more relevance to contemporary Indian life and problems than similar films written by whites, such as "The Squaw's Love" (1911) and "A Pueblo Legend" (1912).

Another postive response came from Thomas Ince, who persuaded Kessel and Bauman's New York Motion Picture Company to hire the Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Circus to provide him with extras, props and livestock (horses and

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21. Ibid.

22. The Moving Picture World, 18 March, 1911, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.95.

buffaloes). As a result, Ince was able to use real Indians in his films.[23] Also, Ince attempted to make his films as accurate as possible. Upon the release of his first film with the 101 Company, "War on the Plains, or Across the Plains" (1912), The Moving Picture World commented that it "marks a distinct step in advance when a manufacturer sees his mistakes and now sets forth to present to the public the great West as it really was and is."[24] Among Ince's other Indian films were "Custer's Last Fight" (1912), "A Frontier Child" (1912), "His Sense of Duty" (1912) and "The Indian Massacre" (1912), which was also released as "The Heart of an Indian" (1913). "The Indian Massacre" depicts an Indian tribe being massacred by whites after the Indians have captured a white, despite the fact that the captive is restored to the whites prior to the attack. In "The Indian Massacre", the captive is returned by the chief (J. Barney Sherry) as a result of his mother's plea. Nevertheless, Ince does not resort to the noble savage stereotype: he does not flinch from depicting the Indians' less desirable characteristics; nor does he adopt the device of gaining sympathy for the Indians by portraying the whites as villains. He presents "both sides of the picture, stressing the problems and courage of the white settlers, but emphasizing most of all the tragedy of the relentless extermination of the Indian."[25]

One complaint aired in The Moving Picture World in 1911 had been that of W.H. Stanley, superintendent of the Southern California Indian Reservation, who had said that:

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23. Paul O'Dell, Griffith and the Rise of Hollywood (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1970), pp.96-97.

24. The Moving Picture World, 27 January 1912, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.124.

25. William K. Everson, A Pictorial History of the Western Film (1969), quoted in Friar and Friar, p.125, but cf. Friar and Friar, pp.125-6. Not having viewed the film, the writer has quoted Everson's view as he is a more reputable historian.
Jack Spears, in "The Indian on the Screen" (Films in Review, Vol.10, January 1959) states that the Kalem Company began "an excellent series" of films about the Seminoles in 1911 (p.20). While this statement admirably fits the argument regarding a positive response from some film makers, it has proven impossible to verify it, and of the three films he mentions, two ("The Seminole's Vengeance" and "An Indian Scout's Revenge") were made...

Continued on next page

> We are trying to teach the Indian that he should be a good farmer and forget about being a warrior, and when he vists the city and sees nothing but the Indian depicted with gun or arrow in his hands, instead of a hoe or rake, he becomes sadly confused, and the better educated among them are deeply grieved.[26]

Theodore Wharton's "The Indian Wars" (1913) attempted to rectify this. Although it was, as its title suggests, mainly about battles between Indians and cavalry (led by Buffalo Bill Cody and General Nelson A. Miles playing themselves), it ended with a section on how the Indians were now living -

> "Indian boys and girls in the uniforms of the schools which they attend...saluting the American flag, Indian-farmers bringing in the results of a season's work, the schools, agencies, and other modern buildings."[27]

While this film presented a somewhat over-optimistic picture of the conditions in which Indians were living, it at least made the point that Indians were no longer savages.

A less positive response to the complaints from Indians came from D.W. Griffith who, one suspects, was annoyed by them. He had striven for accuracy in his Indian films, and had presented Indians sympathetically in such films as "The Redman's View" (1909), "The Indian Runner's Romance" (1909) and "Ramona" (1910), and continued to do so in "The Indian Brothers" (July, 1911) and "The Massacre" (1912), which took the Indians' side in a screen-play about Custer's last stand. In 1911, however, he began using the Indians as nameless and faceless barriers to

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25. (continued from previous page)...before 1911 (1909 and 1910 respectively), and the date of the other ("Love in the Everglades") has eluded the writer. Moreover, "An Indian Scout's Revenge" (or "The Indian Scout's Revenge", as it is listed in some sources) does not seem to be a noteworthy advance, being about a scout single-handedly defeating an entire tribe.

26. W.H. Stanley, quoted in Jas. S. McQuade, "Chicago Letter," The Moving Picture World, 7 October 1911,32.

27. The Moving Picture World, 4 March 1914, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.73.

civilization in such films as "Fighting Blood" (1911) and "The Battle of Elderberry Gulch" (1913), although in the latter it is the whites who initiate the hostilities. According to Jack Spears, the fighting of the Indians in these films

> was savagely realistic. Griffith delighted in showing redskins manhandling frontier women, holding up infants in their feet prior to scalping, and clubbing buckskin heroes with bloody tomahawks.[28]

His experience with the Pueblos during the filming of "A Pueblo Legend" (1912) possibly contributed to his treatment of Indians as savages: a French actor playing a medicine man borrowed a sacred costume from a museum, and when the Pueblos saw him dancing in it and wearing bathing trunks underneath, they thought he was making fun of them. Griffith was summoned to the council room, where he spent a gruelling and, at times, frightening afternoon before being refused permission to do any more filming in the village.[29] After "The Battle of Elderberry Gulch", Griffith apparently lost interest in the Indians, as the only subsequent occasion on which they played a prominent role in one of his films was the battle involving Mohawks in "America" (1924).

A different response to Indian complaints came from The Moving Picture News, which made the Indians an object of ridicule in its report on the Washington protest:

> Let the moving picture man beware! Chief Big Bear and Chief Big Buck are in full war paint...
>
> Why? Because Poor Lo has seen a moving picture show.
>
> ...Chief Big Bear and Chief Big Buck were in Washington last week to have a little talk with their White Father, President Taft...
>
> Chief Big Bear threw savage stoicism to the winds and freed his mind...Translated from English into the well-known jargon that stamps all Indian utterances as authentic, his utterance runs thus:

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28. Spears, p.19. Footnote 25 notwithstanding, the article by Spears is still the best English language work on the subject.

29. Mary Pickford, "My Own Story", (Ladies Home Journal, August 1923), quoted in Friar and Friar, pp.119-20.

> Ugh! Me heat big Injun...This show heap bad. Heap big lie...No Injun man; pale face dressed up like Injun man; poor Injun get blame for bad pale face...You wait. Big Bear and Big Buck raise heap fuss. Picture man look out! Ugh!....[30]

Indians now began to be ridiculed occasionally in films, such as Mack Sennett's "The Tourists" (1912), "Lo, the Poor Indian" (1914),[31] "Reggie, the Squawman" (1914) and "The Indian Suffragettes" (1914), which concerned the exploits of Dishwater of the Oompah tribe.

In 1911 there was an increase in the number of films featuring hostile Indians, and in 1912 there was a further increase, despite that year's decrease in Indian films. While Indian complaints might have triggered this increase in a response similar to that of authors who sometimes name characters meeting unpleasant demises after unfavourable critics,[32] what kept it going was the discovery that films about savage Indians made more money than films portraying them as noble savages. While this was obviously the way in which most of the public wished to see Indians portrayed, attacks on wagon trains etc. were not cheap to stage, and the Indian extras employed created problems. Thus the difficulties involved in producing the kind of Indian films the public wanted were presumably factors in the declining numbers of films produced on the subject. A further factor was World War I, during which Germans replaced hostile Indians and Mexicans as popular stock villains.

When the war ended and Germans ceased to be used as stock villains, Latins rather than Indians were used to fulfil this function, as in "Rio Grande" (1919). While an informal complaint from Mexico in 1919 had little effect, Hollywood took notice in 1922 when the Mexican government announced that it would ban all films from any company

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30. Quoted in Friar and Friar, pp.97-98.

31. This title had been used for a sympathetic film in 1910.

32. For example, the David Hall who gets killed in Errol Brathwaite's The Evil Day (Auckland: William Collins Ltd., 1967) was named after a critic.

that put out offensive films. This was followed in 1923 by a similar ban from Panama, following the release of a film called "Ne'er Do-Well" (1923). One solution was to set films retaining the normal stereotypes in Brazil or Argentina, as in Argentine Love (1924), or in mythical cities and nations, as in The Dove (1928), which was set in "Costa Roja". Another solution was to exchange Mexican bandits for hostile Indians.

Further encouragement for the resumption of films about hostile Indians was the success of "The Covered Wagon" (1923), directed by James Cruz. However, while the Indians in this particular film were hostile, they were motivated by an understandable wish to preserve their hunting grounds. The film's technical advisor, Colonel Tim McCoy, was a blood brother of the Arapahoes (with whom he had lived for six years), and he did a lot to ensure fair treatment for the Indians in this and other films, such as "Winners of the Wilderness" (1926), "Morgan's Last Raid" (1929) and "Sioux Blood" 1929).[33] Nevertheless, in other films of the period, most notably John Ford's "The Iron Horse" (1924), the Indians remained a menace without just cause.

The Indians suffered a similar fate in the literature of the first three decades of the twentieth century, largely due to the influence of Owen Wister. In 1895 his Red Men and White, a collection of short stories, was published. When he looks closely at the Indians, Wister gets beyond the stereotypes as in "Little Big Horn Medicine", in which Cheschapah, a young Crow warrior, convinces other Crows that he is able to perform feats of magic and uses this to persuade them to follow him in a war against the whites. His specialty is making water "boil" with Seltzer fizz salts, which are supplied to him by Sol Kinney, a white trader who finds business somewhat slack in peace time. The old men of the tribe try to keep the peace, not because they are "good" Indians or noble savages, but

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33. But cf. Friar and Friar, pp.150 & 157-59, which casts aspersions on McCoy's knowledge of the Indians with the Friars' characteristic lack of supporting evidence other than a minor criticism of an Indian attack in "The Covered Wagon".

because they know they cannot defeat the whites. Another story, "Specimen Jones", however, is more prophetic of things to come. In it, the Indians constitute a hazard lurking in the wilderness waiting to massacre, for no apparent reason, anyone who ventures beyond civilization (the small station at Twenty Mile). This portrayal was similar to that in The Virginian (1902), which set a new pattern for Westerns, and established the code of the West, which was an apology for the violence of Southern groups like the Ku Klux Klan, in that it glorified the taking of the law into one's own hands and destroying anyone outside the law. This ultimately meant, in later novels, such as Zane Grey's The Roaring U.P. Trail, the destruction of the Indians. The regret with which it was viewed by some novelists, including Grey, did not alter its inevitability, for the Indian was an inferior being: Wister's "Little Big Horn Medicine" recognizes that the Indian is more intelligent than animals, but that he nevertheless has a "primitive brain".[34] In Grey's The Roaring U.P. Trail, the Sioux chief recognizes the whites as "a superior race, but not a nobler one."[35] Although the Indians were favourably portrayed by the likes of Hamlin Garland (who nevertheless believed that they should be civilized), Mary Austin and John G. Neihardt, the bulk of popular Western fiction portrayed them as inferior savages doomed to extinction.

Occasionally a sympathetic book reached the screen. Such a film was "The Vanishing American" (1925) from a book by Zane Grey. This film traces the history of the Indians from before the arrival of the white man to the 1920s. The final episode depicts the Indians living on rocky and infertile reservation land, and being called to serve in the armed forces in World War I. Upon their return they find that their crops have been despoiled during their absence. Richard Dix plays an Indian seeking justice for

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34. Owen Wister, "Little Big Horn Medicine", in Red Men and White (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895), p.27.

35. Zane Grey, The Roaring U.P. Trail (London: Hodder and Stoughton, undated), p.380.

his tribe. Unfortunately, this episode is somewhat marred by the love interest - the Indian hero loves a white school teacher whom he admires from afar, but she is neither in love with him nor aware of his love for her. "The Vanishing American" was, according to Hedy Hartman, the first step "toward decent treatment of Native Americans".[36] Unfortunately, however, it was not a box-office success.[37] Evidently the film-going public did not, at this time, wish to be reminded of something that might be described as a blot in the national copy book. Nevertheless, contrary to what one might expect given the film business's self-view as an industry catering to the demands of the public, Hollywood did not entirely abandon its efforts to treat the Indians fairly. Most of these efforts came in the form of serials and documentaries.

While "The Perils of Pauline" and other serials, such as those starring Ruth Roland, Neva Gerber, Louise Lorraine, and Allene Ray, did not normally venture beyond the bad Indian stereotype, Pathe's "Hawk of the Hills", Mascot's "The Vanishing West", and a number of Universal serials, such as "In the Days of Buffalo Bill", "The Oregon Trail", "In the Days of Daniel Boone", "Heroes of the West", "Battling with Buffalo Bill", and "Flaming Frontier", attempted to treat the Indians more fairly. In some of the Universal serials from 1921 on, such topics as atrocities by white settlers, the violation of treaties by whites, and the Indians' loss of hunting grounds were examined. Moreover, serials provided a lot of work for Indians performers.

The best films about Indians, however, were documentaries, such as Dr. Frank Speck's "Glimpses of Life Among the Catawba and Cherokee Indians" (1930), depicting children at school along with Indians performing such traditional tasks as pottery making and hunting.[38] Another notable documentary was "Nanook of the North" (1922),

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36. Hartman, p.27.

37. Cripps, p.169.

38. Hartman, p.28.

which showed the hard life of the Eskimo. Robert Flaherty originally filmed the Eskimos while on a mining exploration trip, and edited the film upon his turn to Toronto. When he had done so he realized that it would bore audiences as it lacked a story line. As the negatives had been destroyed in an accident involving a cigarette, Flaherty was forced to film it again, and this time he filmed a year in the life of a typical Eskimo (Nanook) and his family. Although the film at first received a mixed reception from distributors, critics, and audiences, and probably would not have been booked at all if Pathé had not made it part of a package deal with Harold Lloyd's "Grandma's Boy", its success in Europe caused Americans to reconsider it, whereupon it became a hit. Unfortunately, the box-office success of "Nanook of the North" was not duplicated by later documentaries, and its success has been attributed, in part at least, to the fact that Eskimos are commonly thought of as a race apart from the plains Indians, and thus white audiences could enjoy it without any of the guilt feelings that might be enduced by a film about reservation Indians. Those aware of the racial similarity could take comfort in the fact that the Eskimos were living as they always had without any imposed changes.

Another good documentary was "The Silent Enemy" (1930), which was originally released as a silent film. It concerned the difficult struggle for survival of the Ojibway tribe, and featured Chauncy Yellow Robe, a relative of Sitting Bull. Unfortunately, when sound was added later it became something of a melodramatic parody.

Indeed, the advent of sound was generally detrimental to films about Indians. In the few that were made in the first half of the Thirties, sound was used largely to make Indians even more fearsome than they had been in the past, and they were portrayed as screaming savages. Most of the time they were essentially "props" and their role was to look savage before being exterminated.

While the cinematic Indians were faring badly in the early Thirties, the real Indians were better off than they had been for some time. The Meriam Report of 1928 had

painted a picture similar to that of the documentaries, and had alerted many Americans to the poor conditions in which the Indians were living. It became obvious, as it had in the 1830s, that assimilation was not working. John Collier was appointed by Franklin D. Roosevelt to take over the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He pushed the Indian Reorganization Act through Congress. This repealed the Dawes Act and inaugurated a new policy. Once again Indian culture was encouraged, and some Indian lands were restored. Chieftanship, however, was not encouraged, Instead, tribes were encouraged to create constitutions, by-laws, and systems of self-government. Loans for the purchase of plant and equipment were given, along with advice on its use. Although the advice was inadequate,[39] the standard of living rose.

Although, as suggested above, this more sympathetic policy was not generally reflected in the films of the Thirties, occasionally it was, as in Cecil B. DeMille's third version of "The Squawman" (1931), a story he had previously filmed in 1913, when it had been possibly the first full-length feature, and in 1918. The plot concerns an Englishman who lives for some years with an Indian woman (Lupe Velez), who bears him a child. Relatives of the Englishman visit him, and when they return to England, they take the child with them. The Indian woman does not see why her child should be taken from her, and commits suicide. Earlier in the film the child has rejected her by showing his preference for an electric train to a wooden horse she has made for him. While the story is not unconventional, in his treatment of it, DeMille sympathizes with the Indian woman rather than the Europeans by endowing her scenes (such as the one in which she carves the horse) with a lyricism absent in the other scenes. He obviously considers her morally superior to the whites. Like Collier's policy, the film is separatist in that it avoids attempting any facile answers, and has a tragic ending. According to Jean-Loup Bourget, its "indictment of pseudo-civilization

39. Alan L. Sorkin, American Indians and Federal Aid (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1971), p.68.

is as harsh as in Arthur Penn's Little Big Man of 1970."[40]

"Massacre" (1934) attempted to gain sympathy for the Indians by showing them unfairly treated by government officials while a college-educated Sioux (Richard Barthelmess) attempts to gain justice for his tribe. The Cheyenne suffered at the hands of the cavalry because of the villainy of white buffalo hunters in "Treachery Rides the Range" (1936), and whites turned government policy to their own advantage at expense of the Indians in "Ramona" 1936). Another sympathetic film, and another box-office failure, was "Laughing Boy" (1934), adapted from Oliver La Farge's novel about a Navajo reservation. It became evident that the public wanted to see only bad Indians.

Film-makers were further discouraged from making more attempts at a fair treatment of the Indians by a stronger dose of anti-intellectualism resulting from a tendency among intellectuals to embrace Communism in the Thirties. In a few cases this led to espionage.[41] Hollywood reacted in two ways. Firstly, films began to reflect the American public's mistrust of deep thinkers. Such a film was "The Dark Command"(1940), in which Bob Seton (John Wayne - the epitome of American conservatism) and Will Cantrell (Walter Pidgeon) both seek the office of town marshal. During the campaigning, Cantrell praises Seton's honesty and courage, but says that the town needs a marshal who knows the law and how to use it. Seton says that he can smell out horse thieves, and that "smelling is more important than spelling", as one must be able to catch a villain before the law can take effect. The contest is not unlike the one that took place in 1828 between

> John Quincy Adams who can write
> And Andrew Jackson who can fight.[42]

Like Andrew Jackson, Seton is made of "common clay", as he tells the film's heroine (Claire Trevor). Seton, of course,

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40. Jean-Loup Bourget, "Social Implications in the Hollywood Genres,"in Theory and Criticism., ed. Barry K. Grant (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press 1977), p.65.

41. Hofstadter, pp.39-40.

42. From a contemporary account, quoted in Ibid., p.159.

wins the election (as Jackson did in 1828), whereupon the intellectual Cantrell shows his true colours and becomes a guerilla leader similar to Charles Quantrill, on whom he is obviously based.

Secondly, Hollywood reinforced its policy of not tampering with audiences' perceptions.[43] Because box-office receipts had not generally encouraged sympathetic portrayals of Indians (although "Ramona" was successful), it seemed that the public perceived the Indians as hostile savages. This was confirmed by the success of "The Plainsman" (1936), a Cecil B. DeMille film which is a far cry from "The Squaw Man": its Indians are the nameless, facelsss type of the post-1911 Griffith films. Over 1,200 Montana Cheyennes appeared in the film. Their leaders complained about one scene in which many of them were held off by a few U.S. Cavalrymen until DeMille showed them Army records revealing that 48 troopers had held off 800 Cheyennes in Colorado in 1868. Ironically, it is less likely to have been its treatment of the Indians that was responsible for the success of "The Plainsman" that its concessions to the gangster genre (for example in its use of a shyster for its main villain), the popularity of which had surpassed that of the Westerns earlier in the decade as such films more closely reflected the attitudes and problems of contemporary American audiences.[44] However,

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43. This was spelled out in "Sullivan's Travels" (1941), in which a producer of comedies wants to make a film about the social conditions in which the lower classes lived. To gain sufficient knowledge of the subject, he travels incognito in slum areas. Eventually he finds himself in a prison camp, where he realizes it would be pointless making the type of film he has been planning as by doing so he would not be fulfilling his function, that of providing entertainment for the masses. When he sees how much his fellow prisoners enjoy a Disney cartoon, he realizes that the comedies he has been producing will do more to enrich the lives of such people than films which merely remind them of their everyday lives. Hollywood, the film implies, cannot change social conditions, so it should do what it does best i.e. help people to relax without having their beliefs or perceptions challenged.

44. But cf. Brian W. Dippie, Custer's Last Stand: The Anatomy of an American Myth (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1976), pp.102-3. Dippie attributes its success to the New Deal's revival of "hope in the future" and a return to fashion of "that optimism so fundamental to the Western myth".

Hollywood, always on the lookint for a winning formula, copied DeMille's treatment of the Indians in a host of imitations, including "Prairie Thunder" (1937), "The Glory Trail" (1937), "Ride Ranger, Ride" (1937), "Kit Carson" (1940), "Badlands of Dakota" (1941), "Apache Trail" (1942), and "The Law Rides Again" (1943).

Another important film of this type was John Ford's "Stagecoach" (1939). While in later films Ford began to suggest that although the Indians hindered the march of progress, they actually "assimilated the values of the American future as it was once dreamed",[45] in "Stagecoach" they are merely a menace. Ironically, since Ford filmed it in Monument Valley largely to assist the Indians there in their battle against starvation,[46] the success of "Stagecoach" further reinforced Hollywood's view that this was how the public wanted to see the Indians.

Before condemning cinemagoers of the Thirties, one must bear in mind that Americans were suffering from the effects of the depression, and the cinema was a place where they went to forget their troubles and relax without being expected to rethink their views or having their notions of the world and its inhabitants challenged. Furthermore, as the depression drew to a close, and life returned to normal, to their credit they became less willing to accept stereotypes. Slowly Hollywood began to change its portrayal of the Indians.

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45. Philip French, Westerns (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), p.101.

46. John Ford,"Our Way West: Burt Kennedy Talks to John Ford," Films and Filming, 16, No.1 (1969), 30-31.

CHAPTER III

WORLD WAR II AND ITS EFFECTS: 1940 TO 1955

By the early 1940's Hollywood's portrayals of Blacks were being attacked by critics, and, probably in an effort to avoid similar attacks on their portrayals of other racial minorities, film-makers began to reassess their treatment of minority groups, including the Indians.

The Marx Brothers set the ball rolling with "Go West" (1940), which ridiculed some of the clichés of films dealing with the Indians: at one point Groucho Marx asks the Indian chief to prove he is an Indian by reciting Haiawatha. "Ugh," replies the chief, to which Groucho retorts, "They've shortened it," When a stock Hollywood Indian maiden (a white actress with plaits, a head-band, and a white dress with beaded fringes) appears and Groucho tries to win her favour with a necklace, she tells him that she would prefer a Cadillac Sedan. One of the problems in trying to ridicule stereotypes of Indians is that it is not always easy for the viewer to tell whether it is the stereotypes that are being ridiculed or the Indians. To make sure there was no such confusion about "Go West", the white man's treatment of the Indians was condemned in a brief exchange of dialogue:

> Groucho (addressing the Indian chief): "Who bought Manhattan Island off you for $24.00?"
> Chico: "The white man."
> Groucho: "Who put a cigar in your mouth and sat you outside a drug store?"
> Chico: "The white man.
> Groucho: "Who put your head on a nickel then took the nickel away?"
> Chico: "The white man."

Similarly, in "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek (1944) the opportunistic Governor McGinty (Brian Donlevy) describes the title incident as "the greatest thing that happened to this state since we stole it from the Indians." Several years later, in "Ma and Pa Kettle Go To Town" (1950), the Indian friends of Pa Kettle (Percy Kilbride) give him some trinkets and ask him to buy back Manhattan Island during his trip to New York.

Other films adopted a more tentative approach, such as "They Died With Their Boots On" (1941), one of the imitations of "The Plainsman" in its adoption of white shysters (Arthur Kennedy and Walter Hampden) as the main villains rather than the Indians. The Sioux are tired of fighting the cavalry, and Crazy Horse (Anthony Quinn) tells Custer (Errol Flynn) that they will give up all of their land except the Black Hills - "for there the spirits of our fathers dwell." The shysters, however, want to put their railroad through the Black Hills, for "they're the gateway to the West." They start a gold rush to the Black Hills, setting off the chain of events that led to Little Bighorn. While the film admits that the Indians were wronged, it nevertheless displays an ambivalent attitude towards them. On the one hand, the film's hero, General Custer, is sympathetic towards the Indians, stating, "If I were an Indian I'd fight beside Crazy Horse to the last drop of my blood." On the other hand, the film glorifies him at their expense. He writes an exposé of the shysters' activities and entrusts it to the care of his wife. It can be accepted as court evidence only as his "dying declaration." Accordingly, he deliberately confronts the Indians at Little Bighorn with an inadequate force, knowing it will result in his death. Thus he becomes a Christ-figure, allowing the Indians to kill him in order that their lands might be saved for them. Also, Custer's companion (Charley Grapewin) makes blatantly racist remarks about Indians, but at no point in the film is there even the merest hint that his attitude might be reprehensible. When a villain makes racist remarks, as in some of the pro-Indian films of the Fifties, it is obvious to the audience that the film-maker is condemning racism, but what is one to think when one of a film's heroes is sympathetic towards the Indians and the other despises them?

Less ambivalent, but of equally dubious taste was "War of the Wildcats" (1943 - also known as "In Old Oklahoma"), in which Dan Somers (John Wayne) protects Indian oil interests from a shyster called Jim Gardner (Albert Dekker). The President (Theodore Roosevelt,

played by Sidney Blackmer) has to decide who will get the lease to operate the lands. Gardner proposes to give the Indians 12½% of the proceeds of the sale of their oil, while Somers intends to give them 50%. When a B.I.A. man declares 50% to be "unheard of" and "fantastic", Somers explains,

> I was raised around the Indians, and I've seen them pushed and squeezed enough as it is, and if my offering them half of what already belongs to them is fantastic, well then that's what I am, whatever it is.

Having been in the army with Somers, and admiring his pioneering spirit, the President awards him the lease on the condition that he makes his first delivery within a specified time. Gardner, with the aid of a treacherous Indian, the Cherokee Kid (Paul Fix), attempts to sabotage Somers' operation. When Somers learns of the Cherokee Kid's treachery, he shoots him, admittedly in self-defence, but with an uncharacteristic display of viciousness. The other Indians fit into the good Indian stereotype, recognizing their inferiority to the whites. For example, when Gardner makes his initial offer to Chief Big Tree (Robert Warwick), the chief asks Desprit Dean (George "Gabby" Hayes), whom he has just met and knows little about, for his opinion, presumably working on the assumption that any white man's opinion is more valuable than an Indian's. The film's message is clear: Indians deserve fair treatment as long as they recognize their inferiority and act as their white benefactors expect them to. Similarly, "Buffalo Bill" (1944) sympathized with the Indians while treating them as inferiors.

During World War II, as in World War I, bad Indians were replaced by more topical villains, and war films, in the manner of Westerns, glorified white American efforts to curb the activities of those who challenged their way of life. While the Germans, because of their racial similarity to white Americans, could not serve as substitutes for the Indians, the Japanese could. Indeed, parallels can be drawn between the group orientation and sexism of the Japanese and the Indians. However, while attention was drawn to the latter characteristic as, for example, in "Destination Tokyo" (1943), in which it is observed, "They don't understand the love we have for our women...

they sell theirs", the dominant characteristics of the Japanese as portrayed by Hollywood were borrowed directly from the bad Indian stereotype. Thus in films like "The Purple Heart" (1944), "Objective, Burma" (1945), and "Back to Bataan" (1945) the Japanese were sinister, sly, deceitful, and cruel, performing atrocities (such as rape and infanticide, according to "Behind the Rising Sun" - (1943) totally abhorent to the clean-cut American heroes.

After the war audiences were less inclined to accept Hollywood's portrayal of racial minorities as inferiors. While this treatment had been merely a reflection of public attitudes, public attitudes had undergone a gradual change over the previous fifteen years.

The depression had caused many people to take a greater interest in current affairs, as they realized that what happened in the world had a direct influence upon their lives. University lecturers found the depression a stimulating time to be teaching, as students displayed an increasing tendency to question the world and the assumptions with which they had grown up. This tendency extended to the public at large: between 1929 and 1933, American public libraries gained nearly four million new borrowers. At this time the main areas of interest were economics and politics. In these areas people sought answers to the problems that beset them.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced his "New Deal" to lift the country out of the depression, it was welcomed by the public and its ideals gladly embraced. The New Deal aimed at improving the lot of lower-income groups and "chopping away at the crust of social castes."[1] Its effect on public attitudes was to produce a widespread concern for the nation as a whole, and a desire to work together to solve the nation's ills.

The questioning nature that had been produced by the depression was boosted by World War II. Firstly, jubilation over the victory was dampened by guilt feelings over the dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the recollection that the last war had been followed by a depression. The questioning of the previous fifteen years had produced few

1. Eric F. Goldman, The Crucial Decade: America, 1945-1955 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), p.6.

answers, and there existed a general desire for enlightenment from any possible source. Secondly, much American wartime propaganda was aimed at the racism of the Nazis in their efforts to ensure a master race. When they learnt of the genocide against "inferior" races practised by the Nazis, Americans were shocked, and recognized the dangers inherent in their own racism. Thus their desire for enlightenment, which early in the Thirties had been aimed at finding the causes and, if possible, solutions to their personal problems, and that had extended, with the advent of the New Deal, to an interest in society as a whole, focussed in part, after the war, in a concern for America's minorities.

An organization called the Commission on Freedom of the Press, operating on grants from Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. and Time, Inc., was formed "to consider the freedom, functions, and responsibilities of the major agencies of mass communication",[2] including motion pictures. In its report on the film industry, the Commission recommended that it

> place increasing stress on its role as a civic and informational agency conscious of the evolving character of many political and social problems. The industry as a responsible member of the body politic cannot shirk its obligation to promote, so far as possible, an intelligent understanding of domestic and international affairs. It should guard against misrepresentation of social groups and foreign peoples.[3]

Hollywood film-makers were inclined to agree. As early as 1916 they had been given an indication of the potential power of film when Thomas Ince's "Civilization" (1915) had been acknowledged by the Democrats as a contributing factor to Woodrow Wilson's election. With the advent of the second World War, the government had to solve the "problem of curing the population of the after-effects of isolationism."[4] In other words, the people had to be made to want to fight. The "Why We Fight" series (1942 on) and numerous films portraying war as an exciting adventure, such as "A Yank in Burma" (1942) and "Winged

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2. Ruth A. Inglis, Freedom of the Movies: A Report on Self-Regulation from The Commission on Freedom of the Press (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), p.iv.
3. Inglis, p.vi.
4. Leif Furhammar and Folke Isaksson (Tr. Kersti French), Politics and Film (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p.64.

Victory" (1944),[5] were major contributing factors to the recruitment drive. Film industry personnel serving in the armed forces were particularly impressed by the influence of the cinema on the war effort, and "began to see new opportunities and responsibilities for the films".[6] Having discovered that films could influence the public to a large extent, and having been reminded of their responsibilities by co-workers who had served in the tropps and by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, industry spokesmen after the war began to advocate films combining entertainment with information. Jack Warner stated that motion "pictures are entertainment - but they go far beyond that."[7] He coined "the term 'honest entertainment' to convey the impression of a Hollywood fighting for truth, democracy, international understanding, etc."[8] The President of the Motion Picture Association, Eric Johnston, claimed that "the motion picture, as an instrument for the promotion of knowledge and understanding among peoples, stands on the threshold of a tremendous era of expansion."[9]

Thus Hollywood perceived its task to be one of enlightening the public on social issues, of which a major one was racism. For its part, the public, having fought a war which propaganda had caused them to see as partly a war against racism, wished to learn more of the minority groups of their own country, and were less inclined to be satisfied with the old stereotypes.

Where the Indians were concerned, however, there were two major obstacles to a better treatment. Firstly, whereas Blacks had been portrayed largely in terms of favourable, if patronising, stereotypes, the Indians had been primarily villains for over thirty years, the occasional sympathetic films notwithstanding. Films of the Forties abound with similes and metaphors associating the Indians with savagery and villainy, such as "What on earth are you

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5. Clyde Jeavons, A Pictorial History of War Films (Secaucus: The Citadel Press, 1974), p.112.

6. Inglis, p.35.

7. Siegfried Kracauer, "National Types as Hollywood Presents Them" in The Cinema 1950, ed. Roger Manvell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950), p.145.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., pp.145-46.

doing sneaking around like a redskin?" (Henry Daniell to Bela Lugosi in "The Body Snatcher" - 1944), "Go play Indian somewhere else" (John Wayne to Dick Purcell after disarming him in "In Old California" - 1942), and "not an Indian in sight...There's no-one here to scalp us but the congregation" (Fredric March to Martha Scott in "One Foot in Heaven" 1941). Particularly perjorative was the word "squaw". As late as 1962 the likening of Ann Helm to "an Indian squaw" (on account of her tracking ability) was sufficient to get Joanna Moore pushed into the sea in "Follow That Dream". To have killed Indians was a feat to be proud of for screen characters good and bad, e.g. Helen Westley in "Lady From Louisiana" (1941) boasts that she comes from fighting stock - "My grandmother...defended her land by scalping Indians."

Secondly, Americans had always been distrustful of Soviet Russia. While Russia was looked on more favourably during the war as it was one of America's allies, when it proved to be a difficult partner after the war, the situation of mutual distrust known as the Cold War eventuated.[10] In the United States, the House Committee on Un-American Activities looked for signs of left-wing activity in Hollywood from 1947 on, and anything resembling social criticism risked being labelled "un-American". Despite this, some film-makers bravely went ahead with films which attempted to treat racial minorities more favourably, especially Blacks, as in "Home of the Brave", "Intruder in the Dust", "Pinky", and "Lost Boundaries" (all 1949). However, while Blacks were anxious to join American society, Indians were not. They wished to live outside of white society in their own way. John Collier had pushed through legislation to effect this, but after the war he was removed from office by a congressman who would not approve the Indian Service budget unless Collier "resigned".[11] Once Collier was out of the way, the Dawes Act was reinforced in a further attempt to assimilate the

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10. Stanley Hoffman, "Revisionism Revisted," in Reflections of the Cold War: A Quarter Century of American Foreign Policy, ed. Lynn H. Miller and Ronald W. Pruessen (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), p.11.

11. Donald L. Parman, The Navajos and the New Deal (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p.289.

Indians, as separatism was considered un-American. Thus any attempt to portray Indian life and aspirations in sympathetic terms was likely to be frowned upon by the Committee.[12]

Nevertheless, in this period there were film-makers who attempted to improve the lot of the Indians on the screen. However, while the Hollywood Writers Mobilization was Communist-dominated and the Communist newspaper "Daily Worker" bemoaned the poor treatment accorded the Indians on the screen, and while liberals have since been quick to take the credit for the better treatment that soon followed, they did nothing about it at the time.[13] Rather, it was the more conservative John Ford who pioneered the post-war examination of the Indian problem. Ford's first post-war Western, "My Darling Clementine" (1946), did not herald any change from the bad Indian stereotype: the only Indian to play a part in the action of the film was a drunken one (Charles Stevens) viciously kicked out of town by Wyatt Earp (Henry Fonda). However, Ford's next Western, "Ford Apache" (1948) displayed considerable sympathy for the next Western, "Ford Apache" (1948) displayed considerable sympathy for the Indians. It concerns Owen Thursday (Henry Fonda), who arrives as the new commander of the fort somewhat disgruntled that he has been sent to fight Apaches rather than one of the "great" tribes, such as the Sioux. He complains, "We're asked to ward off the gnat stings and flea bites of a few cowardly digger Indians."

Cochise (Miguel Inclan) has left the reservation, and Thursday has to bring him back. The cause of the problem is Meacham (Grant Withers), a crooked Indian agent. Where whites have beem blamed for the problem Hollywood has rarely risked offending audiences by casting the blame on society as a whole, preferring instead to invent fictional villains who are not typical of their race. This is a typical

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12. It is also worth noting that the customs and social organization of the League of the Iroquois was the basis for Communism, although it is unlikely that this was common knowledge at the time. V. Peter Farb, Man's Rise to Civilization As Shown by the Indians of North America from Primeval Times to the Coming of the Industrial State (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969), pp.99-100.

13. Joan Mellen, Big Bad Wolves: Masculinity in the American Film (London: Elm Tree Books, 1978), pp.142-43.

example, although it does not cast all of the blame on Meacham's shoulders, saving some for the Indian Ring, which Captain York (John Wayne) describes as "the most corrupt political group in our history." York explains that after two years of peace with Cochise, Meacham was sent

> "and then it began - whisky but no beef, trinkets instead of blankets, the women degraded, the children sickly, and the men turning into drunken animals. So Cochise did the only thing a decent man could do - he left, took most of his people...into mexico."

Thursday uses York to lure Cochise back under false pretences, and when York protests that he has given his word to Cochise, Thursday says, "Your word to a breech-clouted savage, an illiterate, uncivilized murderer and treaty-breaker! There is no question of honour, sir, between an American officer and Cochise."

While Thursday is not presented in entirely unsympathetic terms, Ford presents his attitude towards the Indians as reprehensible. Unfortunately, however, Ford's treatment of the Indians in "Fort Apache" breaks no new ground. Cochise is every bit as honourable as the Cochise of "Broken Arrow" (1950), but he conforms to the noble savage stereotype, and his character is not developed in the film.

The other two films in Ford Cavalry trilogy are rather less sympathetic towards the Indians. "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" (1949) has a former chief (Chief Big Tree) who is neither a "good" Indian nor a noble savage, but rather an old man who would like to stop the young braves from making war with the Cavalry but is powerless to do so. The other Indians are presented as brutal savages who even kill the whites who supply them with rifles. Similarly, "Rio Grande" (1950) portrays them as cruel savages and makes no attempt to justify their actions, and the presence of a good Indian (a Navajo scout) does nothing to make the viewer sympathize with the hostile Apaches. Nevertheless Vine Deloria, an outspoken Indian who would prefer white culture to ignore the Indians altogether,[14] has stated that Ford's treatment of the

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14. Vine Deloria, Jr., Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1969), p.27. Deloria states, "What we need is a cultural leave-us-alone agreement, in spirit and in fact."

Indians in these films was accurate, and that it would have been false to deny the Indians' eruptions of brutality.[15]

Few film-makers of the late Forties were as bold as Ford was in "Fort Apache" as far as the sympathetic treatment of Indians was concerned, and most did not venture beyond facile references to unseen Indians, such as that of Cornel Wilde in "Forever Amber" (1947), who, when chided by Linda Darnell for telling their son about a "savage" (his Indian chief friend), retorts that his friend is no savage and by the Indians' standards is more of a gentleman than most of the London gentry.

In 1950, the National Film Committee of the Association on American Indian Affairs was formed to advise film-makers on Indian matters in the hope of eliminating stereotypes and ethnological errors. Their efforts soon yielded results: in that year 20th Century-Fox released "Broken Arrow" which was, according to Cheyenne John Buffalo Horn, "what we all hoped for - for a long time."[16] The main theme of this film is two men's friendship and mutual respect. While this was not a new or uncommon theme, it was new in the sense that one of the men was an Indian - Cochise (Jeff Chandler). The Apaches are presented as having a culture as complex as that of the whites, and, in some respects, superior. Cochise's white friend, Tom Jeffords (James Stewart), for a time chooses to live with the Indians because he finds their society preferable to his own. This necessitated major changes to the standard Western plots, in which the hero had normally belonged to white society and had defended it's values from the villain or villains. In "Broken Arrow", while the individuals in the society are weak, as a group they are strong. Jeffords defends his individual values rather than those of the society, which rejects him. It was probably the fact that the new plot struck a responsive chord in the minds of the public that made "Broken Arrow", along with

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15. Andrew Sinclair, John Ford (London: Goerge Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1979), p.149.

16. John Buffalo Horn, quoted in Harold Mantell, "Counteracting the Stereotype: A Report on the Association's National Film Committee," American Indian, N.Y., 5 (Fall 1950), p.20.

"Colt.45" (also known as "Thunder Cloud") and "Winchester 73", one of the three most popular Westerns of 1950.[17] The film, according to Will Wright, anticipated new social values in its view "that love and companionship are available-at the cost of becoming a social outcast-to the individual who stands firmly against the intolerance and ignorance of society."[18] Jeffords, in the film, finds happiness with his Indian wife (until she is killed by whites) at the cost of being rejected by white society. Wright sees this as part of a trend towards corporate heroes as society changed to a corporate one after World War II to meet the demands of an increasingly technological civilization. The Western, he suggests, has gone through four basic plots since the Thirties. First there was what he calls the classical Western plot, which dominated in the Thirties, and in which the hero enters a social group to which he is a stranger, but which recognizes his exceptional ability (usually as a gunfighter) and gives him a special status, while not completely accepting him. When the society is threatened by villains, the hero avoids involvement until one of his friends is endangered by the villains, whereupon he fights and defeats them, thereby saving the society. The society accepts him, but he does not retain his special status. From the late Thirties this plot had a companion which Wright calls the vengeance variation. The vengeance variation was similar to the classical plot, but whereas in the classical plot the hero remained in the society throughout, in the vengeance variation he temporarily rejected the society in his quest for vengeance, but eventually re-entered society. "Broken Arrow" introduced what Wright terms the transition theme, as it signals a fundamental change from heroes within society to heroes outside of it. In the transition theme, the hero is a member of the society at the start, but,having rejected it, he does not re-enter it as he had in the vengeance variation. This plot offered no

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17. Four Westerns grossed over $4,000,000 in the U.S. and Canada in 1950, but the fourth was a 1949 film, Ford's "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon".

18. Will Wright, Six Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p.187.

explanation of what happened to the hero after the end of the story. Such an answer became evident in the professional plot, which has dominated from the late Fifties, and in which the heroes are teams of experts who are outside of society throughout the film, and who help the society in return for a monetary reward. Wright sees this as a result in the decline in importance of the "individualistic, aggressive businessman" and the increasing importance of groups of specialized men, professionals, who work together for a common goal."[19]

Another possible explanation of the success of "Broken Arrow" is that audiences saw, in it and the other transition theme films (notably "High Noon" and "Johnny Guitar"), a response to the actions of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Jeffords, who does nothing harmful to the white society in "Broken Arrow", could be seen as a victim of the committee by virtue of his association with the Indians, who could be seen to represent either communists or other victims of the committee. Indeed, one of the other transition theme Westerns, "High Noon", was criticized by John Wayne, the epitome of American Conservatism. He considered Gary Cooper's throwing his star into the dust Un-American.

Whether or not it was intended as an analogy for the treatment of those with communist affiliations, "Broken Arrow" was undeniably a sincere effort to improve upon the treatment Indians had been getting in films. One problem it tackled was that of Indian speech. Rather than using "ugh" - type dialogue or having the Indians speak in poetic metaphors, Delmer Daves allowed them to speak much like the whites and had James Stewart announce at the start that the story was true and that the only change was that where the Indians spoke their own language in reality, in the film they would speak English so that the viewer would understand them.

One of the other major successes of 1950, "Colt.45", exhibits a similar plot to "Broken Arrow", although while lawman Steve Farrell (Randolph Scott) throws down his badge when rejected by the society, the film becomes a vengeance variation Western rather than a transitional one when he

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19. Ibid., p.178.

later relents and rejoins the society. Nevertheless, as in "Broken Arrow", the Indian society is presented as being preferable to that of the whites. The Indians help Farrell to save the white society from the villains. Moreover, the Indians do not merely follow Farrell. Rather, they initiate much of the action and save Farrell from the villains on more than one occasion. The Indian chief, Walking Bear, is played by a real Indian (Chief Thunder Cloud). However, this film is not in the same class as "Broken Arrow", lacking the air of authenticity that pervades that film.

Another 1950 film that was of comparable quality to "Broken Arrow" was "Devil's Doorway", which featured Robert Taylor as an educated Shoshone war hero who tries to retain his land by legal means in the face of unfair laws to deprive him of it. His efforts, and those of his white lawyer girlfriend (Paula Raymond), are unsuccessful, and eventually he is forced to defend his land by force of arms with the aid of his tribe which is hopelessly outnumbered and defeated by the whites who, thanks to the plotting of white shyster Louis Calhern, are joined by the army.

The profitability of "Devil's Doorway" is in some doubt. M,G.M. claim it was a success,[20] whereas the editor of "Focus on Film" has referred to "its reputed financial failure".[21] However, it was definitely not as successful as "Broken Arrow", and this would seem to support the view that it was the new plot that was chiefly responsible for the latter's success, rather than its treatment of the Indians. Nevertheless, the latter should not be overlooked as a factor contributing to the success of "Broken Arrow", as numerous Westerns followed the standard plots (those to which the public responded, subconsciously or otherwise) without becoming box-office giants, and the public was undeniably in the mood for sympathetic films about minority groups.

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20. John Douglas Eames, The MGM Story: The Complete History of Fifty Roaring Years (London: Octopus Books Ltd., 1975) p.236.

21. Editor's comment in Robert Larkins,"Hollywood and the Indian," in Focus on Film, 2, March-April 1970, 45.

Whatever the reason for the success of "Broken Arrow", film-makers obviously attributed it to the film's treatment of the Indians, for a wave of sympathetic films followed. Some of the more notable ones were: "Jim Thorpe - All American" (1951), "Navajo" (1951), "The Big Sky" (1952), "Drum Beat" (1954), "Apache" (1954), "The Last Hunt" (1955), "White Feather" (1955) and "The Indian Fighter" (1955). The presence of these films, however, did not mean the end of the old type of Western in which the Indians were nameless and faceless savages. Such films were still common, and included the likes of "I Killed Geronimo" (1950), "Distant Drums" (1951), "Apache War Smoke" (1952) and "The Charge at Feather River" (1953), in which the Cheyenne attacks were enhanced by 3-D. Despite a 1956 addition to the Production Code forbidding any film "that tends to incite bigotry or hatred among peoples of differing races, religions, or national origins",[22] such films appeared regularly until the mid Sixties, and isolated examples continued to appear at least as late as 1970 (e.g. "Land Raiders"). In some films of this type the Indians were given a reason for their hostility, such as not wanting to go to a reservation ("Fort Defiance" - 1951), which encroachment on their land ("Great Day in the Morning" - 1956), or some undefined form of trouble-making ("The Wonderful Country" - 1959, and "The Comancheros" - 1961), but were, nevertheless, still treated as no more than a barrier to civilization.

Midway between the sympathetic and hostile films were those which, like some of the frontier romances of the 19th Century, commiserated with the Indians before killing them off without any suggestion that the heroes might be wrong in so doing. Films of this type were "Hondo" (1954) and "Fort Yuma" (1955).

In the films attempting to treat the Indians fairly, a number of common themes were used. One of the most common of these was racism on the part of whites. The Indian-hating white was by no means a new phenomenon in the Western, but he (or sometimes she, such as Mona Freeman in "Dragoon Wells Massacre" - 1957) became an increasingly common one,

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22. Kenneth Macgowan, Behind the Screen: The History and Techniques of the Motion Picture (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1965), p. 362.

as blatantly racist remarks from unpleasant whites proved a crude but effective device for gaining sympathy for the Indians. A typical example is Ben Slade (Will Geer) in "Broken Arrow", who cannot believe that Tom Jeffords would associate with the Apaches if he was not making some sort of financial gain. (Ironically the real Jeffords was.) When Indians Robert Taylor and James Mitchell enter a saloon in "Devil's Doorway", racist James Millican says, "I don't think it's right for an Indian to stand at the same bar as a white man." Emile Meyer, in "White Feather", advises fellow whites wishing to go prospecting in Cheyenne country to buy repeaters and "run 'em off the land," and in "Fort Yuma", an Indian-hating miner kills what he calls a "dirty, murdering, filthy" Apache chief who has come to the fort for a peace talk. More interesting than most such characters is Boone Caudill (Dewey Martin) in Howard Hawks's"The Big Sky" (1952). Like many of Hawks's films, "The Big Sky" concerns the comradeship of a group of men. Caudill hates Indians because he mistakenly believes that one killed his brother. However, when Poordevil (Hank Worden), an Indian who has become one of the group, is the victim of a kidnap attempt, the solidarity of the Hawksian group overcomes Caudill's racism, and he initiates the Indian's rescue.

Another theme was that of white injustice. For example, in "Slaughter Trail" (1951) three whites murder two Navajos, and the white authorities turn a blind eye to it, despite the protestations of the other Navajos. The most notable exposition of this theme is "Devil's Doorway" in which, as stated above, Shoshone Robert Taylor dies when the army enforces unjust laws enabling evil whites to take his land from him. Occasionally there was a suggestion that Indian justice was superior to that of the whites, as in "The Wild North" (1952), in which Jules Vincent (Stewart Granger) accidentally kills a white racist (Howard Petrie) and tells his Indian chief friend (John War Eagle) that if he was to be his judge he would confess, but that he will not confess to the whites because he does not think he would get a fair trial.

A third theme was the white corruption of Indians. The most notable film using this theme was "The Big Sky", from the novel by A.B. Guthrie, and concerning mountain men who bring whiskey and white man's diseases to the Indians, thus weakening and corrupting them. Hollywood, however, was not yet ready to make a blanket condemnation of the white man's treatment of the Indians. Thus, whereas the abovementioned films had condemned racism, they had attributed it mainly to single people, not whole societies. Even in "Broken Arrow", where the people of Tucson had turned against Tom Jeffords, it was only a villainous minority who had taken up arms and killed Sonseeahray, and the responsible citizens had come to their senses in the end. Thus in the film version of "The Big Sky" the effects of the coming of the whites are far milder: the whisky, with which Guthrie states that "a man could get nearly anything he wanted from the Indians - from all of them, anyhow, except the Comanches, who didn't care for drink",[23] corrupts only one Indian in the film, and he is presented as an exceptional case regarded by the other Indians as a disgrace to his tribe. The sickness, too, is changed from smallpox, which exterminates large numbers of Blackfoot Indians in the novel, to "grabs" - the white man's acquisitiveness and greed, which may be as detrimental in its own way, but is less shocking to the casual viewer. Nevertheless, "The Big Sky" was a step towards a recognition of the fact that the Indians were subdued as much by the destruction of their lifestyles and methods of social control as much as, if not more than, by means of their losses in battles against the whites.

The decimation of the Indians in battle and by other means was an occasionally occurring theme in the sympathetic films of the Fifties, although the genocide practised was always the whim of one racist, and society as a whole was never blamed. Chivington's massacre of Cheyenne at Sand Creek was depicted in "Massacre at Sand Creek" (1956). Even though Chivington is presented as being unrepresentative of his race, the present obscurity of this film suggests that the sight of the U.S. Cavalry committing such an act, even

23. A.B. Guthrie, Jr., The Big Sky (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p.243.

when following the instructions of a mad officer, did not appeal to the American public. More cautious in its approach and highly regarded today, though a box-office disaster at the time, is "The Last Hunt" (1955), in which Charlie Gilson (Robert Taylor) attempts to exterminate the buffalo, working on the principle that "one less buffalo means one less Indian." Ironically its financial failure was not due to public aversion to the destruction of the Indians so much as the fact that viewers were sickened by the sight of falling buffalo knowing that they were really being killed - M.G.M. made the mistake of announcing that it was filmed during the annual thinning of South Dakota's buffalo herd.

Another theme infrequently explored was that of the difficulties encountered by Indians trying to survive in a white world. One such film was "Navajo" (1951), a semi-documentary about a seven-year-old boy on a reservation trying to adjust to the white man's world but feeling the tugs of his Indian heritage. This theme was also present in "Apache" (1954), Massai (Burt Lancaster), a renegade Apache, learns from a Cherokee (Morris Ankrum) that the only way Indians can live with whites and retain their dignity is to live like them, abandoning their old ways and customs and becoming farmers. When Massai is incredulous at the fact that the Cherokee fetches water for his wife, the Cherokee merely replies, "Some of the white man's ways are hard."

A common them in these films was miscegenation, which was not always viewed as being undesirable as long as the male was white and the female was Indian. While in post-war films it was permissible for a Latin man to marry a white American woman, as in "Three Daring Daughters" (1948) and "Neptune's Daughter" (1949), Hollywood seemed afraid that the public would not accept a marriage between an Indian man and a white woman, although it was not forbidden by the Production Code[24]. Thus such a romance was destined to be ill-fated, as in "Devil's Doorway". While it is true that romances or marriages between white men and Indian women led to the death of one partner in "Colorado Territory" (1949),

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24. The Production Code had a ban on miscegenation, but it applied only to Blacks, not Indians. Evidently the effects of the nineteenth-century literary ban had not quite worn off.

"Broken Arrow", "Across the Wide Missouri" (1951), and "The Last Outpost" (1951), both partners remained alive and together in "The Wild North" (1952), "Santa Fe Passage" (1954), "The Indian Fighter" (1955), and "White Feather" (1954). In "White Feather", Josh Tanner (Robert Wagner) choses an Indian bride (Debra Paget) in preference to the white woman he has been seeing (Virginia Leith), although the blow of a white woman losing the hero to an Indian is softened by the fact that having been raped she is not, as her father (Emile Meyer) puts it, "fit merchandise for marriage." If such an attitude towards a women raped by a white man is surprising in a reasonably enlightened film such as "White Feather", even more surprising is the fact that a white woman captured and violated by Indians is considered a suitable marraige partner for a hero (Guy Madison) of the distinctly unenlightened "The Charge at Feather River" (1953). Thus it would seem that while Hollywood was initially unsure how its post-war audiences would react to miscegenation between Indians and whites, by the mid-Fifties it was considered acceptable as long as the male was white and the female was Indian. Romance or sexual relations between Indian men and white women have rarely been encouraged, however: in "The Canadians" (1961) a woman (Teresa Stratas) who has been captured and raped by Indians is killed off before her romance with Frank Boone (John Dehner) has a chance to develop, and in "Run, Simon, Run" (1970), Indian Burt Reynolds dies, although not before his white girlfriend (Inger Stevens) has conceived his child.

A popular literary theme, that of a savage or primitive man teaching a civilized man, was given surprisingly few airings in the cinema. Although it is present to a limited extent in Delmer Daves's "Broken Arrow" and William A. Wellman's "Track of the Cat" (1954 - adapted from Walter Van Tilburg Clark's The Track of the Cat), few others used it.

Few of the sympathetic films of the early Fifties contained characters of much complexity. This was especially true of the whites, who normally liked Indians or hated them. One notable exception, however, was "The Indian Fighter" (1955). Its hero, Johnny Hawks (Kirk Douglas), sympathizes with the Indians, and marries one (Elsa Martinelli)

but is not untainted by the racism of his fellow whites. For example, he readily admits to liking Indians, but does not appreciate being called an "Indian lover." Also, when an Indian enrages him by wounding his horse, he savagely kills him, then to procure another horse treats another Indian in the same manner. A few Indian characters had more depth than their screen predecessors, such as Little Dog (Jeffrey Hunter) in "White Feather", who harboured racist feelings towards whites as a race, yet was capable of liking individual whites. Most, however, conformed fairly strictly to the stereotypes.

The use of stereotypes is, of course, a form of inaccuracy, and its continuation was symptomatic of the situation regarding accuracy in general in the films of the Fifties. Admittedly, some satisfactory attempts were made to portray the Indian as he was, notably in "Apache" and "The Last Hunt", but these were exceptions. Historical inaccuracies, too, abounded. Hollywood, having become accustomed to twisting history to suit the demands of the Production Code[25] and state censors, had, it would seem, developed a rather distorted idea of what constituted historical accuracy. "White Feather" is a good illustration of this, as it's opening narration, which is almost identical to that of "Broken Arrow" states, "What you are about to see actually happened", with the "only difference" being that the Indians will speak in English. The year is given as 1877, the setting is Cheyenne territory around Fort Laramie, and the plot is about the removal of the Northern Cheyenne to the Southern Cheyenne reservation which actually took place in 1876. In reality it followed a military defeat, but as the film's intention was to show the Indians in a sympathetic light, it would have been necessary to portray the army as the aggressor. This, too, could have created problems, as censors (not to mention the public) did not like films portraying the armed forces in an unfavourable light.[26]

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25. Inglis, pp.162-4 and 186 document and comment upon the changes necessary to add "compensating moral values" to make "Conquest" (1937), a film about Napoleon Bonaparte's affair with Marie Walewska, so it would conform with the Production Code.

26. Ibid., pp.83-4.

Thus in the film the removal follows the signing of a treaty with Chief Broken Hand (a fictional character), although in reality no treaties were signed after 1868, and in 1871 they were outlawed when Congress enacted that no Indian tribe would be recognized as an independent power with which the U.S. could contract a treaty.

Onto this is grafted the story of Headchief and Youngmule, two Cheyennes who, in 1890, killed a white boy in their efforts to prove their manhood and were killed resisting arrest. In the film these two, now called Little Dog and American Horse, are proven warriors (veterans of Little Bighorn) and prefer to die as such rather than go to the reservation.

At the end it is re-emphasized that the story is true. If the broad outlines of history could be so blatantly disregarded in such a cavalier manner, the customs and beliefs of individual tribes were hardly likely to fare any better, especially the former, as such information as details of eating habits etc. are not always easy to find. Merely asking an Indian is no solution: there is no reason to assume that a modern Indian knows any more about the everyday activities of his ancestors of a century ago than a white man knows about his. Moreover, even acknowledged experts such as Iron Eyes Cody are not infallible. For example, although it has long been well established that scalping was of Indian origin, Cody and other Indians insist that Indians learnt it from whites.[27] Thus, in the absence of an easily accessible source of reliable information about Indian customs, it is hardly surprising that Hollywood has tended to make up its own. However, since accuracy has always been a matter of great concern to Indians, and since the sympathetic films of the Fifties did little to improve the situation, Indians were not overly impressed by Hollywood's new "Indian policy".

Another problem, related to that of inaccuracy, and of equal concern to Indians, was that of the use of white actors in Indian roles. Real Indians were sometimes used in small roles, but the leading Indian roles were, with rare

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27. James Axtell and William C. Sturtevant, "The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalping?" The William and Mary Quarterly, 37, No.3 (1980), 451-72, especially 455. A brief summary of the main arguments of this article appears in Chapter Six of the present work.

exceptions such as "Colt.45", played by whites. A number of films of this period dealt with famous chiefs, and Indians were not pleased to see them constantly played by whites, as in "Broken Arrow" (Jeff Chandler as Cochise), "Sitting Bull" (J. Carrol Naish), "Chief Crazy Horse" (Victor Mature), and "The Indian Fighter" (Eduard Franz as Red Cloud). It is possible, however, that the long-standing practice of using whites in Indian roles was at least partly responsible for the lack of any Production Code ban on miscegenation between Indians and whites, as it reinforced the old belief that Indians were essentially white men with a few odd habits and beliefs.

A significant part of the overall problem was, according to Jack Spears, that the Indian had always been dealt with in terms of "his physical conflict with the whites", and that his real problems had received only casual treatment.[28] While he was correct, there was little Hollywood could do about it. While it may be safe to tamper with the form of the Western, as in "Broken Arrow" (with its new plot), tampering with the formula is entirely another matter, for it invites box-office failure. As the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press had pointed out, films "are made to be seen and can do little good unless they reach an audience in keeping with the high cost of picture-making."[29] Thus if Hollywood was to change the public perception of the Indians, it could do it only with the bounds of commercial cinema which meant, in the case of Westerns, keeping to the established formula.

The Western formula is not something that was arrived at haphazardly. Like the form (the plots discussed earlier), it evolved from aspects of thought, though in this case not peculiarly American thought, hence the popularity of Westerns in other countries. Sigmund Freud believed that art reflects psychic conflicts which one, having failed to resolve them in childhood, is forced to resolve over and over again in art (or, failing that, in dreams and neurotic behaviour). John Cawelti has suggested that the Western formula "resolves

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28. Spears, p.27.

29. Inglis, p.15.

the tension between a strong need for aggression and a sense of ambiguity and guilt about violence", which is, he says, "a classic symptom of the Oedipus conflict."[30] The conflict is resolved by having a hero who destroys a group of villains, and is justified in doing so because the villains are endangering the society. Accordingly, there is a tripartite division of characters, consisting of the hero (or group of heroes), the villains or savages, and the townspeople. The Indians usually fall into the role of the savages. While the savages are not always villains, (who may sometimes come from the town as in "Broken Arrow") they are always outside of society, and while the formula remains successful, that is where they are likely to remain as long as they are regarded as only an ingredient of the Western.

That is not to say that no attempts were made to tamper with the formula. In "Chief Crazy Horse", for example, Crazy Horse (Victor Mature) was the hero, but the film strayed from the formula and was thus not as successful as those which kept the formula intact, such as "Broken Arrow", "The Charge at Feather River" and "Hondo". When, as in "Broken Arrow", the Indian was treated sympathetically, the main focus, in accordance with the formula, was the white hero and the problems created by his friendship with the Indians. There was, however, one major exception to this - "Apache" (1954). "Apache" was a standard vengeance variation Western with the roles reversed so that the hero, Massai, was an Indian, the society was his tribe, and the villains were the whites. To avoid offending audiences, however, the whites were not totally villainous. The Colonel who authorizes Massai's exile, for example, is rather like Pontius Pilate in the Gospels: he wants to let Massai stay and try to become a farmer but accedes to the demands of the agent (John McIntire), who considers him dangerous, rather like the High Priests who want Christ executed in the Gospels. The Biblical analogy does not end here. Indeed, the middle section of the film appears to be

30. John G. Cawelti, The Six-Gun Mystique (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971), p.14.

an analogy based on the Gospel story, despite the fact that Massai is not killed.[31] The Christ-figure (Massai) comes to save his people from degradation by making them farmers: as Nalinle (Jean Peters) puts it, "Our people have been dead. Massai will make them live again." However, the Priest-figure (the agent) considers him dangerous, and a Judas-figure, Santos (Paul Guilfoyle), betrays him and he is captured. The Pilate-figure (Colonel Blake, played by Walter Sande) wants to set him free and let him stay, but the agent demands his exile and the Colonel eventually agrees with a hesitant, "Well, all right," whereupon Massai is taken away - the films's equivalent to the crucifixion. (One could argue that his escape and his eventual success in growing corn represent the Resurrection, but this might be extending the analogy a bit far.)

While the success of "Apache" proved that the public did not object to Indian heroes, the fact that "Chief Crazy Horse" (1954), "Sitting Bull" (1954) and other films with Indian heroes did not equal its success, evidently led film-makers to believe that "Apache" was a fluke, for Indian heroes, although they continued to appear, did not become frequent. Thus, in accordance with the formula, the Indians remained in the role of savage (good or bad) in the tripartite division of characters or part of the background as in "Great Day in the Morning" (1956) and others.

After the first post-war lot of sympathetic films, then, it seemed that the sympathetic treatment of the Indians had gone about as far as it could go. However, they gained a new lease on life as a result of a new government policy - termination.

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31. It is obvious that the original intention was for Massai to die, as the dialogue prepares the viewer for his death. The ending was evidently changed as a concession to the box-office.

CHAPTER IV

ASSIMILATION OR SEPARATISM?: 1953 TO 1965

In August, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's government inaugurated its "termination" policy, a further attempt at assimilation. Its aim was to end the government's special relationship with the Indians. The control of the reservations was to be handed over to the states, and the states were to break them up. Indians were less than enthusiastic about the policy: as one Crow aptly put it, the whites had replaced the buffalo with government, and now they wanted to hold on to the government.[1] As a result of termination, many Indians lost their land and found themselves unable to compete in a white man's world. By 1960, 61 tribes had been terminated, and by 1970 around 300,000 Indians lived in squalor and poverty in city slums.

Because of Hollywood's financial need to reflect majority views and, hence,government policy in order to make its products acceptable to as many people as possible, one might expect that post-termination films dealing with the Indians would express a pro-assimilation viewpoint. However, to the average filmgoer it would seem that the welfare and status of the Indians were not pressing concerns, and that Hollywood was likely to lose few customers by supporting or criticizing government policy on the subject. Thus film-makers evidently felt free to follow a literary trend towards examining aspects of the assimilation versus separatism issue. In both literature and films the issue was examined in terms of the problems encountered by or as a result of (a) whites living with Indians, (b) Indians living with whites, (c) half-breeds living with whites, and (d) half-breeds torn between two societies.

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1. D'Arcy McNickle, commentary on "The Bureau of Indian Affairs," by Louis R. Bruce, in Smith and Kvasnicka, pp. 251-52.

Novels and films about whites living with Indians were successors of the captivity narratives, but were inclined to present a more favourable view of the Indians than their predecessors generally had. Prior to termination, films on the subject had glossed over "the tragic aspects of such a situation".[2] "The Savage" (1952) is more concerned with action than emotional conflict. While Charlton Heston's portrayal of a man torn between two cultures (a white raised as a Sioux) goes rather beyond the demands of the script, the film suggests that he will be able to move freely between both societies and will be considered fit to marry a woman of either race (although the Indian woman who loves him is conveniently killed off). In "Flaming Feather" (1952) the captive has no love for Indians, despite the fact that she has lived with them since childhood, and is glad to be rescued. In reality it is unlikely that she would have lived long enough to reach adulthood if she had not become assimilated into the tribe. Indians had complex methods based on sound psychological principles for turning white children into loyal tribe members, and were generally successful when the children were captured at an early enough age.[3] The first film of the post-termination period to portray this with any degree of accuracy was (surprisingly) "The Charge at Feather River" (1953). While it is doubtful how seriously one can take the ethnology of a film in which the hero (Guy Madison), supposedly an expert on Indians,asserts that "Indians don't like to fight at night" because "(i)f they get killed in the dark it'll always be dark in their Happy Hunting Grounds", its portrayal of two white women captured by Cheyenne is not altogether inaccurate. While children usually took about six months to make the transition from white to Indian, captives over fifteen or sixteen often never did. Such is the case in the film: Jenny McKeever (Vera Miles), who was a child when captured, considers

2. Larkins, p.47.

3. James Axtell, "White Indians in Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 23, No.1 (1975), 55-88, especially 66-78.

herself an Indian, whereas her sister Anne (Helen Westcott), who is older, hates Indians because of their massacre of her parents and her own treatment. However, as Indian indoctrination programmes involved separating captives from their white friends and relatives, it is unlikely that two sisters would live in the same teepee as they do in the film. Also, while it is true that indoctrinated captives sometimes developed racist feelings towards whites, in the film this is exaggerated to the extent that Jenny renounces her brother ("No white man is my brother.") and eventually kills him. The film's comment on the assimilation versus separatism issue is that racism on both sides makes assimilation impossible: Anne feels she cannot return to white society because of the treatment she will get as a result of having lived with Indians, albeit against her will. Indeed, she experiences feelings of contempt amongst the men who rescue her. For example, when she goes to get water for the men, some of them assume she has returned to the Indians. Indian racism is exhibited by an old Arapahoe left to die by his people and found by the cavalry brigade. Although the cavalry are not at war with the Arapahoe, he uses his remaining energy to kill one of the cavalrymen because of his hatred for whites.

Other films about rescued captives returning to white society offer similar warnings about racism as a barrier to assimilation. In John Ford's "The Searchers", as in Alan Le May's 1955 novel from which it was adapted, when the search for Debbie Edwards (Natalie Wood) has gone on for some years and it is realized that she will have become a Comanche, Laurie Jorgenson (Vera Miles), who serves as a representative of the white community, supports the plan of Ethan (Amos in the book) Edwards (John Wayne) to kill her when he finds her. He does not do so, however, in the book because he is killed before he gets an opportunity to, and in the film because he finds himself unable to. Neither "The Charge at Feather River" nor "The Searchers" shows how the former captives are treated when they return to white society. Ford, however, tackled the subject in "Two Rode Together" (1961), in which two captives are exchanged

by the Cheyenne for rifles. One is a Mexican woman who finds her white rescuers far less understanding and hospitable than the Cheyenne had been. The other is a young man who has to be tied down to prevent him from returning to the Indians. Only a foolish women and her husband will have anything to do with him. When the woman cuts him loose, he kills her and is lynched by some of the other whites.

Inasmuch as they did not offer any answers to the problems of assimilation, the above-mentioned films can be said to support separatism. Walt Disney's "The Light in the Forest" (1958) took the opposite view (although it did not suggest that Indians should be forced to live like whites). Conrad Richter's 1953 novel of the same name had been marginally more optimistic than Alan Le May's The Searchers, but had offered no simplistic solution. The novel dealt with the Delawares' surrender of their white captives after their defeat by Colonel Henry Bouquet in 1764. John Butler, who has been raised as the son of Cuyloga, is returned to his white parents. His racist Uncle Wilse makes things difficult for him, and when two of John's Delaware friends visit him, Wilse kills one. John returns to the Delawares, but finds he cannot lead a group of white settlers into an ambush when he is supposed to act as a decoy. Some of the Indians wish to kill him for warning off the settlers, but Cuyloga intervenes and John is sent back to the whites. The novel ends with him belonging to neither culture and facing a bleak future. Walt Disney's films, however, customarily have happy endings, and his film of Richter's novel is no exception. While the film includes all of the action of the novel with no significant changes, several new characters are added and the story continued past the point where the novel ends. At the end John (James MacArthur) beats Wilse (Wendell Corey) in a fist fight, whereupon Wise suddenly reforms and admits, "He's white, all right." His unpunished murder of Little Crane is forgotten, revealing, it would seem, a subconscious racist streak in the film's makers: killing an Indian, it is implied, does not constitute murder. This would seem to be an oversight more than anything else,

since Disney's films have usually tried to treat the Indians fairly. More significant is the increased importance of Shenandoe Hastings (Carol Lynley), an indentured servant who is such a minor character in the novel that she is not even given a name. In 1938, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis had listed a selection of "dubious value-judgments common in the movies". One was "(t)hat the successful culmination of a romance will solve most of the dilemmas of the hero and heroine."[4] It is this assumption that is used to give "The Light in the Forest" a happy ending: John falls in love with Shenandoe, but while he shows some indecision before returning to the Indians, his feelings for her are not sufficient to make him stay. Nevertheless, when he is sent back by the Indians, the future he faces with Shenandoe is not the bleak one he faces in the novel, and to the extent that it suggests that someone raised as an Indian can adapt to European ways the film is assimilationist. In all fairness, however, this alteration is not without precedent in the novel. When, in the film, Del Hardy (Fess Parker) suggests that John's assimilation might be hastened if he were to fall in love, he is merely echoing a remark made by Parson Elder in the novel: "One of these days he'll notice some pretty and desirable girl...Then it won't be long till he's settled in our white way of life."[5] The difference is that Richter, despite his stated intention to be fair to both sides, tends to treat the whites and their attitudes, including this one, with a degree of contemptuous irony, whereas screenwriter Lawrence E. Watkin, in adapting the novel for the screen, has taken it seriously.

Despite these flaws, the film succeeds where the novel fails in achieving a balanced view of both sides. Although the Indians are the same in the novel and the film, by comparison with the whites the reader is inclined to see them as noble savages (despite Richter's attention to accuracy in the lengthy discourses an Indian life and culture that at times threaten to turn the novel into an

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4. Inglis, p.10.

5. Conrad Richter, The Light in the Forest (London: Transworld Publishers, 1955), p.73.

anthropological text book), whereas in the film it is more apparent that there is good and bad on both sides.

One of the more significant films on the subject was Samuel Fuller's "Run of the Arrow" (1957), in which O'Meara (Van Heflin), a Confederate soldier who does not want to associate with Yankees after the Civil War and, after befriending a Sioux named Walking Coyote (Jay C. Flippen), decides he wants to become a Sioux. He is eventually accepted into the Ogallala Sioux and marries Yellow Moccasin (Sarita Montiel). His feelings toward Yankees soften when one sacrifices his own life to save O'Meara's adopted son. Later, when O'Meara cannot bear to watch the torture of a soldier (Ralph Meeker), he realizes that a man cannot change his race ("What you were born you will die.") and leaves the Sioux to return to civilization, taking his Indian family with him.

Despite much research, "Run of the Arrow", like most, if not all, of the sympathetic films of the 1950s, falls prey to anthropological errors and longstanding Hollywood assumptions about such matters as Sioux religion, the size of teepees (making them too small), the distribution of labour (men doing women's work, such as scraping hides), and fighting tactics. Also, while director Samuel Fuller proudly declared it to be the first American film in which the Indians won, they do so by numerical superiority rather than superior fighting skill. Nevertheless, it credits the Sioux with a culture equal to that of the whites, and deals with their social and political organization with a greater degree of accuracy than was (or is) customary. The film's viewpoint is that the two cultures, while having many similarities, are irreconcilable, and the two races should live at peace but separate from one another. In other words, it preached separatism and reinforced its message with a printed statement at the end: "The End of This Story Can Only Be Written By You", which anticipated the genre of revolutionary films by encouraging the viewer to act on the information he has received, presumably in this case by writing to his congressman suggesting that the government's termination policy be ended.

The second category of post-termination films, those about Indians living with whites, varied from films like "Navajo" and "Apache" in that whereas these films had been concerned with the efforts of Indians to live as Indians in a white man's world, the post-termination films depicted Indians living as members of white families. The most important film in this category is "The Unforgiven" (1960), adapted from a 1957 novel of the same name by Alan Le May, the author of "The Searchers". According to Ralph and Natasha Friar, "The Unforgiven" is "(p)robably the most anti-Native American film ever made" because "there is no counter-balance to all the hatred" expressed by the white characters.[6] Yet there is in the film's theme, which is that the barrier to assimilation is not racial differences but racism on both sides. Thus the film and novel support separatism to the extent that assimilation is seen as an impossible goal. The Indians in "The Unforgiven" are cruel and savage, but not lacking in culture, which is how the Kiowas were. While they honoured their treaties with the United States, the treaties were made before Texas, where the film is set, became part of the United States. When the U.S. complained about their raids on Texas they argued that Texans had always been their enemies and still were. The state of war continued until 1874, the year in which the film's action takes place.[7]

The plot of "The Unforgiven" is the reverse of "The Charge at Feather River" and its successors in that it concerns the efforts of the Indians to recover a woman captured from them as a baby. However, like the earlier films, it is told from the white side. Despite variations in plot, both novel and film have the same viewpoint - that members of either race can adapt to the ways of the other if started young enough. In the book it is never firmly stated that the woman, Rachel, is a Kiowa or if she was a white baby captured by the Kiowas and recovered from them, but it is implied that she is a Kiowa. Some of the Kiowa warriors

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6. Friar and Friar, pp.241-2.

7. Clark Wissler, Indians of the United States: Four Centuries of Their History and Culture (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p.223.

in the novel are white or nearly white by birth but hate whites as much as Rachel hates Indians. The film does not delve into the racial origins of the Indians, but firmly establishes that Rachel (Audrey Hepburn) is a Kiowa. In both she has been raised as the daughter of Matthilda Zachary (Lillian Gish), and when Abe Kesley (Joseph Wiseman) spreads a rumour that she is a Kiowa, the neighbours turn against the Zacharys and the Kiowas try to get her back, first by peaceful means and ultimately by force. In the film, Cash Zachary (According to the newspaper advertisements, "if you said it in Kiowa...it sounds like "Cain"!") (Audie Murphy) is an Indian-hater but ultimately finds his family loyalty stronger than his racism. The film ends after the Kiowas have been driven off, having failed to recapture Rachel, and Cash's return replaces the book's ending in which the neighbours, who have turned against the Zacharys, rally round them again and adjust to Rachel's presence by convincing themselves that she is white.

On the screen, a similar situation to that portrayed by Le May can be found in "Broken Lance" (1954), in which Matthew Devereaux (Spencer Tracy) is too important a man to be ostracised or offended, so his neighbours think of his Comanche wife (Katy Jurado) as a Mexican and address her as "Señora". In "Flaming Star" (1960), the Kiowa wife (Dolores Del Rio) of Sam Burton (John McIntire) is accepted by his neighbours (although it is obvious that they are aware of the difference between her and themselves) until hostilities break out, whereupon she is reviled as a "squaw".

"Broken Lance" is of more importance to the third category of post-termination films - those dealing with half-breeds living as whites. Such films generally saw racism as a barrier to assimilation, but were inclined to be more optimistic than the films about full-blooded Indians living with whites. The half-breeds in these films rarely suffer crises of identity, and regard themselves as white. In "Broken Lance", Joseph Devereaux (Robert Wagner) has little time for Indian mysticism, calling his father's Indian foreman (Eduard Franz) a "superstitious old fool" when he talks of omens. When he courts the daughter (Jean Peters) of a local politician who later becomes governor

of the state (E.G. Marshall), the politician, who is an old friend of his father, objects, explaining that while he has tried to overcome his racism, it is an indelible part of him. Nevertheless, at the end of the film Joseph marries her. Similarly, in "The Tin Star" (1957), Morgan Hickman (Henry Fonda) has been brought up as an Indian-hater, and is shocked to learn that his landlady's son, Kipp (Michel Ray), is half-Indian and not half-Mexican as he had supposed, but he has little apparent difficulty in overcoming his racism and adopting the boy as his son.

Martin Pawley (Jeffrey Hunter) in "The Searchers" seems to suffer from no racism, and being half-Cherokee gives him a double perspective: he can accept both Laurie's wish for a home and Debbie's miscegenation with Scar.[8] While none of these films see racism as an insurmountable problem as long as the half-breeds act as white men (although none goes as far as suggesting that Indians should reject their own culture and adopt that of the whites), "Reprisal" (1956) (which replaces the Blacks in the novel with Indians) has a half-breed hero (Guy Madison) who is forced to hide his Indian ancestry and pretend he is white as he lives in a racist community. The film belongs partly to this category and partly to the fourth, that of half-breeds torn between two societies, for when three vicious brothers start killing Indians, he begins to question his white values, and when his Indian grandfather (Ralph Moody) is killed, he rejects the white community and adopts Indian ways.

One film that is not really concerned with the assimilation versus sparatism issue, but which makes a facile comment on the subject is "The Indian Fighter", which suggests that the more half-breeds there are the better, for they will not know on which side to fight and will thus remain peaceful. A more sensitive look at the problem of a half-breed not knowing which side to join was offered in "Flaming Star" (1960), adapted from Clair Huffaker's 1958 novel Flaming Lance by Huffaker himself and Nunnally Johnson. Like the half-breed in "Reprisal", Pacer Burton (Elvis Presley) is living as a white man with

8. Joseph McBride and Michael Wilmington, John Ford (London: Secker and Warburg, 1974), pp.157-8.

his white father and brother (Steve Forrest) and his Indian mother. However, unlike his counterpart in the earlier film, he is not out of touch with his Indian relatives, having both Indian and white friends. The trouble starts when the Kiowas, led by Buffalo Horn (Rudolph Acosta), become concerned with the number of whites settling in their territory, and go on the warpath. The whites turn against Pacer and his mother and, to a lesser extent, his father and brother. Buffalo Horn asks Pacer to join his warriors, but having been raised as a white, he does not feel that he could "ride with those fellows, killing and burning and all that." When his mother is killed by a white man, he changes his mind and joins Buffalo Horn on condition that his father and brother are not harmed. However, some Indians riding to join Buffalo Horn, unaware of the agreement, find Pacer's father herding cattle and, considering him a present from the gods, kill him. Pacer's brother, Clint, seeks vengeance. He encounters a party of Kiowas (including Pacer) and kills Buffalo Horn, but is wounded in the process. Pacer finds his family loyalty stronger than anything else and saves Clint. He puts him on a horse that is from the white settlement and will carry him there. When Clint realizes that Pacer is going to attempt to hold off the Kiowas he says, "That's crazy! There's too many of them." Pacer replies, "I know it. If it's got to be like this the rest of my life, to Hell with it", and rides off to meet his death. Like "The Unforgiven", "Flaming Star" does not express any disapproval of miscegenation or assimilation, but it suggests that white racism makes assimilation impossible. Unlike "The Unforgiven", however, it does not portray the Indians as racists. Rather, they merely wish to preserve their land against white encroachment. Director Don Siegel's films usually deal with a protagonist torn between two extremes of behaviour. One extreme is a drive towards conformity (the townspeople in this film) and the other is more spontaneous, and perhaps primitive, and in this film the Indians fill this role. Siegel's preference is always for the latter, and this explains his preferential treatment of the Indians.

The whites in "Flaming Star" are racists, but they are more developed as characters than the racists of "Broken Arrow" and its immediate successors. Before the trouble begins Pacer and his mother are accepted, but it is apparent from the start that there is a degree of tension when a dinner guest (L.Q. Jones) at the Burton home compliments Mrs. Burton on her cooking, inadvertently adding, "When it comes to cooking, no-one'd ever guess that you was any different from our ma or anyone else." Although the latent racism of the townspeople does not really come to the surface before the hostilities begin, Pacer, before leaving to join the Kiowas, reveals that his and his mother's acceptance had depended upon their recognition of their inferiority when he says,"All Ma and me ever got from whites was mean looks and "Don't get uppity with us."" The attitude of the whites, prior to the trouble with the Kiowas, is similar to that of the whites in "War of the Wildcats", but whereas the earlier film did not question it, "Flaming Star" condemns it.

It seems, then, that the dominant view expressed in films of the post-termination period was that assimilation is desirable (as long as miscegenation took place only between white men and Indian women), but, because of racism on one or both sides, it was seen as unachievable and thus separatism was the only way of avoiding trouble. Even "The Light in the Forest", which suggested that someone raised as an Indian could be converted back into a white man without too much difficulty, did not dispute this view: when Wilse accepts John at the end it is because John has decided he wants to be a white man. There is no indication that Wilse feels any differently about Indians than he did earlier in the film.

Sincere though most of these films were, they did not accurately state the problem. Rather, they took the right view for the wrong reason. While racism does exist, it is not the main barrier to assimilation. White society, on the whole, has "long been willing to accept the Indians socially and economically to a degree that stands in marked contrast to its attitude towards blacks."[9] The primary barrier to

9. Carl N. Degler, "Assimilation Vs. Separatism," in The American Indians, designer John S. Thomson (Wellington: United States Information Service, 1973), p.55.

assimilation is that Indians do not wish to join white society. As their response to the Puritans, the Jeffersonians, the Dawes Act, and termination has shown, the Indians simply do not wish to substitute their own culture and way of life with one that is not demonstrably better. The only film of this period to suggest that the Indians had their own cultures and should be allowed to keep them in peace was "Run of the Arrow".

The above-mentioned films were not the only ones of the mid-Fifties to mid-Sixties period to sympathize with the Indians. The recognition that Hollywood had not always treated them fairly often came in films not directly concerned with Indians, but which ridiculed Indian stereotypes and Western clichés, albeit usually in facile asides. While attacking something by making people laugh at it was not a new idea, it has rarely been successful, at least as far as the Indians have been concerned. Apart from the Marx Brothers' "Go West", mentioned earlier, there had been attempts to ridicule Hollywood's portrayal of Indians as early as 1920, when Douglas Fairbanks, as an Eastern dude in "The Mollycoddle", attempted to speak to a college-educated Hopi in "ugh" talk, whereupon the Indian replied, "What the Hell are you talking about?" Buster Keaton's "The Paleface" (1921), according to Ralph and Natasha Friar, took "the absurd ingredients inherent in all Indian films and put them into their proper perspective."[10] "Incendiary Blonde" (1945) includes a scene depicting the filming of a Western starring Texas Guinan (Betty Hutton). She is being pursued by Indians and, when she fires a shot, eight of them fall off their horses. When someone comments on it, the director says they will call the film "The Magic Bullet", as the light is going and there is not time to do it again. Examples from the Fifties and early Sixties include a scene from "The Five Pennies" (1959) in which a parody of a commercial features an Indian maiden with feathers in her hair and a white fringed dress singing to the accompaniment of a band of Canadian Mounted Policemen, and "But Not For Me" (1959), in which a Greek theatre magnate (Thomas Gomez)

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10. Friar and Friar, p.146.

jokes that popcorn sales are keeping his theatres open and, out of gratitude to the Indians for "inventing" corn, he averts his eyes when the cowboys shoot the Indians in a film shown in one of his theatres. In "G.I.Blues" (1960), Tulsa McLean (Elvis Presley) tells his German girlfriend (Juliet Prowse) that his Cherokee grandmother taught him to play the guitar (on which he has demonstrated considerable skill earlier in the film) and that he has an Indian uncle who plays "the best hot clarinet that you'd ever want to hear." When she says she thought Indians only played tom-toms, he replies, "That's just in the movies." A further example is a scene from "Magnificent Obsession" (1954) in which Helen Phillips (Jane Wyman), Bob Merrick (Rock Hudson) and Judy (Judy Nugent) act out the roles in a Western comic. Helen is blind so she is given the role of the Indian, the reason being that her inability to read the dialogue will not be a handicap as all the Indian ever says is "Ugh". A similar attempt to ridicule Indian stereotypes by having Indians saying only "Ugh", Walt Disney's "How the West Was Lost" cartoon, was less successful in this respect because it depicted Indians rather than merely having characters speaking about them. Once Indians are presented to the viewer (albeit in cartoon form), it becomes difficult to tell whether it is the stereotypes or the Indians who are being ridiculed. More recent examples have not offered any solution to this problem: "Cactus Jack" (1979) features Paul Lynde as Nervous Elk, whose insistence on conforming to clichés such as not attacking before dawn ("six twenty eight and forty five seconds according to almanac") among other factors causes the failure of his mission. While upon later reflection its intention becomes apparent, during an initial or casual viewing the film is inclined to strike one as merely funny or offensive, depending on one's view of Indians.

Perhaps the classic example, because it has been widely misunderstood and commented on as another example of Hollywood's unfair treatment of the Indians, is Howard Keel's performance in "The War Wagon" (1967), which ridicules the good Indian stereotype. To make sure the viewer has got the message, Kirk Douglas at one point tells him,

"you're a good Indian." Yet he is good only from the point of view of the whites: having rejected his culture in the manner of the good Indians of the frontier romances, he regards the other Indians as his inferiors as they have not adopted the white man's ways. Also, he cheats Mexicans at cards. In addition to possessing the characteristics of the literary good Indian stereotype, he also possesses Hollywood's additions to it in that he is unmistakably a white actor in an ill-fitting wig.

It would appear, therefore, that the ridiculing of stereotypes and clichés is rarely a successful device as it is too easily misunderstood. A better idea is the ridiculing of attitudes, which British writer Johnny Speight took as the basis for the television series "Till Death Us Do Part" in the late Sixties. The idea was not new, having been used, for example, in "Five Weeks in a Balloon" (1962), in which a pompous British general (Richard Haydn) frequently makes such statements as "All natives should learn the Queen's English." Speight, however, did not trust his audiences to see through the bigotry of Alf Garnett (Warren Mitchell), so he gave him a liberal son-in-law (Anthony Booth) to let the viewers know what they were supposed to think about the issues raised. However, while the Friars thought "The Unforgiven" was racist because it contained nothing to balance the racism and bigotry, it was precisely this balancing factor that doomed "Till Death Us Do Part" to failure: the conservative majority, when forced to take sides, found the bigot preferable to the liberal. Having accepted the bigot as the character with whom they were going to identify, they were less inclined to question his views. The same problem occurred in the American version of "Till Death Us Do Part", "All in the Family".

Where Indians are concerned, this approach has rarely been tried. Nevertheless, it was used in a variety show parody of "All in the Family" which was filmed shortly after some Indians had taken over Alcatraz during a protest. Archie Bunker (John Wayne) was accused of being anti-Indian but he disagreed, saying that when the Indians had taken over Alcatraz he had said that they should be allowed to stay there.

Thus by the end of the Fifties Hollywood was attacking the government's termination policy with vigour and, at the same time, beginning to recognize that there was still room for improvement in its own treatment of the Indians.

CHAPTER V

THE ACCURACY QUESTION

In the light of Hollywood's newfound concern for them, one might expect that the Indian reaction would have been a favourable one. Yet they were, it seems, unimpressed: in 1958, 62 tribes protested in Oklahoma, echoing the complaints Indians had been making since the early days of the cinema. If such a protest seems rather ungracious in view of Hollywood's efforts to portray them in a more sympathetic manner (although it must be borne in mind that there were still numerous films which displayed little or no advance from the films of the Thirties and Forties), in all fairness it must be pointed out that the Indians had never asked for sympathy, but had always requested accuracy. Nevertheless, at least some of the sympathetic films had displayed efforts to portray the Indians with a greater degree of accuracy. Therefore, let us examine the specific complaints of the Indians, all of which were fair earlier in the century but some of which had at least been tackled by film-makers by 1958.

Of the greatest concern to Indians is (The complaints have not changed significantly since 1958.) their portrayal as inferior fighters to whites. While they have normally been able to win screen battles only by numerical superiority, according to Clark Wissler "Indians would not attack unless they outnumbered the whites".[1] Nevertheless, it was not uncommon in films for a few whites to defeat a vastly superior force of Indians, as happened in several occasions in "The Charge at Feather River", and thus the complaint is justified to some extent where battles are concerned. When single combat was portrayed it was extremely rare for an Indian to beat a white man in a film. In "Apache", Massai overcomes several whites, but one would have difficulty in finding another pre-1958 example, and even since then Hollywood has shown a remarkable reluctance to allow an Indian to beat a white man. In "Flaming Star", half-breed Pacer Burton defeats two whites, and in "My One and Only" (1978) an Indian

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1. Wissler, p.263.

(Chavo Guerrero) defeats Henry Winkler in a wrestling match, but they are exceptions to the norm. More typical are two of Will Sampson's screen fights. In "Relentless" (1978), of which he is the hero, he is unable to defeat one of the villains (although at least it is explained earlier in the film that the villain has had special army training in unarmed combat). Sampson was allowed to overcome four villains in a 1979 episode of "Vegas" (subtitled "The Visitor"), but only by pinning them to a wall with a forklift truck. While Plains Indians, with which the vast majority of Indian films deal, had little occasion to engage in single combat as the normal goal in battle was to touch an enemy with one's hand or a ritual stick (an action which has somehow come to be known as the coup) rather than kill him, it nevertheless seems unlikely that every time a white man and an Indian fought each other the white man won. Since Hollywood has created the impression that this is the case, it would seem that Indian complaints on this matter are fully justified.

In addition to portraying them as inferior fighters, Indians claim that Hollywood has, in its films, portrayed them as generally inferior races. As suggested earlier, this was true of many pre-"Broken Arrow" films such as "War of the Wildcats" and "They Died With Their Boots On". In the latter some Indians led by Crazy Horse steal some horses from Custer and his men, who retrieve them as easily as if they had been stolen by children. However, after "Broken Arrow" serious films had not treated Indians as inferiors, and "Flaming Star" condemned such treatment. Nevertheless, there were still many films of the Fifties and early Sixties treating the Indians as inferior savages. A typical example is "Garden of Evil" (1954) in which the Apaches are brutal villains killing whites only because it is the "Moon of the White Man", a month during which they annually celebrate the time they massacred all of the white settlers in the area. Other examples include "Savage Sam" (1963) and "The Glory Guys" (1965). Even "Cactus Jack", despite its honourable intentions, portrays the Indians as inferiors. They do not seem to do anything well, and when they attempt an attack on horseback they all fall off their horses. This complaint, then, does not seem to be without justification.

A further area of concern is the portrayal of drunken Indians in what are considered excessive numbers. While there may be some justice in this complaint, Indian inability to control their desire for alcohol has been an obstacle to racial harmony since the Seventeenth Century. Moreover, a tendency of Indian performers to get drunk and cause trouble was one of the reasons Hollywood replaced them with whites in tan make-up. Since Hollywood's portrayal of drunken Indians can be traced back to the experiences of the early film-makers, it is hardly surprising that complaints about it have had little effect. While drunkenness has never been a standard characteristic of any of the stereotypes, drunken Indians have been familiar figures throughout Hollywood's history from "The Call of the Wild" (1908) to "Best Friends" (1974).

Another complaint concerns Indian dialogue. Ted Siminoski has compared sections of the dialogue of "Custer's Last Stand" (1936) and "Run of the Arrow" (1957) and found a considerable difference: Young Wolf (Chief Thundercloud) in "Custer's Last Stand" is barely coherent, whereas Walking Coyote in "Run of the Arrow" speaks fluent English as proficiently as the whites do. This is not untypical of the changes that had taken place in Indian dialogue during the Fifties.[2] After "Broken Arrow" Indians spoke much like whites, although sometimes they spoke in the poetic metaphors of the frontier romances. Jack Spears, in his discussion of Indian complaints, suggested that Indians were more "loquacious and humorous" than Hollywood had portrayed them.[3] While exceptions can be found, such as Little Dog and American Horse in "White Feather" and (later) Old Lodge Skins (Chief Dan George) in "Little Big Man" (1970), screen Indians undeniably have a tendency towards stoicism. Yet stoicism, a characteristic of the Indian stereotypes, has, as suggested earlier, been an observed characteristic of Indians, and was taken over by Hollywood from nineteenth-century literature. It probably originated from shyness in the presence of whites, i.e. the Indians' failure to register

2. Ted Siminoski, "Sioux Versus Hollywood: The Image of Sioux Indians in American Films" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1979), pp.30-33.

3. Spears, p.33.

emotion in the presence of whites was mistaken for stoicism. This is indirectly suggested in "Flaming Star", in which the stilted and formal manner displayed by the Indians in the presence of whites vanishes when they sit around their camp fire. Philip French has suggested that subtitles are the answer to the problem of how to present Indian speech.[4] On some occasions they have been used, as in "A Distant Trumpet" (1964), "Soldier Blue" (1970) and "When the Legends Die" (1972). Subtitles, however, are not popular with audiences, and are thus unlikely to become the norm. Another method has been to have the Indians speaking in their own languages most of the time and lapsing into English for the important passages, as in Burt Lancaster's conversation with Two Crows (Armando Silvestre) in "The Scalphunters" (1968). At least as far back as "War of the Wildcats" (1943) short conversations, the meanings of which have been obvious from the action of the films, have often been conducted in the Indians' own languages, but this is no solution to the problem of how to have Indians in major roles speaking. It seems evident that Hollywood is willing to let screen Indians speak in a manner satisfactory to real Indians and comprehensible to white audiences if one can be found. To date, it would appear, one has not.

Inadequate comprehension of Indian culture and customs, another common subject of Indian complaints, had also received some attention from film-makers by 1958. Again a comparison of "Custer's Last Stand" and "Run of the Arrow" is instructive. Both portray Sioux camps. In "Custer's Last Stand" there are a few sparsely decorated teepees, no children, and no cooking fires or implements visible. As Ted Siminoski has pointed out,

> (t)his film is representative of Indian films of its period. It creates no atmosphere, and establishes no believable environment in which the Indians live. The village and the Indians' home activities are seen only when that will advance the plot. In this period of Indian film-making, the Indians represented cardboard villains with no motivation and no sense of values.[5]

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4. French, Westerns, p.92.

5. Siminoski, p.87.

As mentioned earlier, much effort was made to make the camp in "Run of the Arrow" as accurate as possible. While it does not manage to escape all of the erroneous assumptions that had grown up in half a century of film-making, it represents a change from the shallow and superficial view of pre-"Broken Arrow" films. In other words, film-makers were still making mistakes but some, at least, were making an effort to portray Indians accurately. There was, nevertheless, still a tendency to assume that one tribe was much like another, and if a film dealt with a historical incident concerning a little-known tribe, its makers did not hesitate to substitute the name of another tribe. "Falming Star" is an example of this: it concerns a Kiowa uprising in Texas in 1878, led by Buffalo Horn. Historically this makes little sense as the last of the Kiowas surrendered in 1875. It is, however, a recognizable (if exaggerated) account of a Bannock uprising in Idaho which took place in 1878 and in which the chief's name was Buffalo Horn. It was felt, one assumes, that the name Bannock was too little known and did not sound "Indian" enough. Yet even when such a change was considered necessary, presumably for commercial reasons, attempts were made to portray customs accurately. In "Flaming Star" the common Indian custom of treating anyone at the campfire with courtesy and consideration (regardless of who he might be) is accurately portrayed. The tribe's rejection of Neddy (Dolores Del Rio) after she has married a white man is also accurate: while the rifle had made it easy to kill the bison, it took just as long as it ever had to dress the hides so they could be sold to white traders. Consequently, a hunter needed as many wives as he could afford to do this work. Therefore, the loss of a woman was a blow to the tribe and such a woman was likely to be rejected, as in the film.[6]

Nevertheless, some films which were sympathetic towards the Indians made no attempt to portray them any more accurately than had earlier films. Such a film was "Young Guns of Texas" (1962). In one scene, for example, some dead bodies are found. "Apaches?" asks one character.

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6. Farb, p.128.

"No," replies another, "if it was they'd be scalped." Yet the real Apaches were one tribe who rarely scalped their victims.

It would seem, then, that while film-makers had, for the most part, tried to treat Indian customs and culture with a greater degree of accuracy, they had not tried hard enough as far as the Indians were concerned.

A sixth complaint is that films about Indians are usually set in the Nineteenth Century, and Indians resent Hollywood's failure to show their accomplishments both then and in modern times. This criticism was voiced as early as 1911, when W.H. Stanley complained to The Moving Picture World that the Indians of the Southern California Indian Reservation objected to seeing Indians portrayed as warriors instead of farmers. Occasional attempts have been made to show modern Indians farming on reservations in such films as "The Indian Wars", "The Vanishing American" (1925 and 1955), and "Johnny Tiger" (1966), but it is not a particularly exciting subject. To be sure, it was not the fault of the Indians that the government decided they had to be farmers or ranchers, but it was not Hollywood's fault either, and film-makers can hardly be blamed for preferring to depict the Indians' more interesting former life.

Coupled with the above complaint is one that modern Indians have been neglected as the subjects of biographies. Here, one might suggest, they are on shakier ground. Such films have been made, notable "Jim Thorpe - All American" (1951) and the two about Ira Hayes - "The Outsider" (1962) and "The American" (1960), a television film, but there are few if any modern Indians famous enough to attract white audiences to theatres to watch films about their lives.

A complaint worthy of more serious consideration is that Hollywood has presented inadequate and fallacious characterizations of Indians. While it is true that Indians have normally been portrayed in terms of stereotypes, there are, it seems, sound psychological reasons for this. Doubt and fear are closely related,[7] and thus men fear the unknown. To make it less frightening one evolves or adopts

7. Rosemary Gordon, Stereotype of Imagery and Belief as an Ego Defence, The British Journal of Psychology Monograph Supplements, 34 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p.41.

already formulated beliefs to explain the processes of spiritual, biological and social life. In establishing one's view of the world, one must form opinions on "a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than (one) can directly observe."[8] The pace of modern life and the distances separating different peoples make it largely impossible to do more than notice a few traits common to a race or nationality and turn them into stereotypes. By doing this we build up a view of the world. While such a view will obviously be an oversimplification, we feel comfortable with it as it eliminates the unknown. Of course, where films are concerned one can argue that if one is to spend ninety minutes watching a film on a subject one might as well be using the time to correct one's oversimplified and probably erroneous view of that subject. Moreover, one might say that since films, by showing lifelike events in convincing locations, give the appearance (albeit erroneously) of coming to us directly "without human meddling" and thus plant images of other races etc. more firmly in our minds than paintings, sculptures or literature,[9] film-makers have a greater responsibility to ensure that we get a true picture. Yet in the early days of the cinema its influence was an unknown factor, and the early film-makers were not intellectuals and did not ponder such matters. If they had there is no guarantee that the same stereotypes or similar ones would not have emerged. According to C.G. Jung, we see other people from our mothers onwards in terms of archetypes existing in our collective unconscious, a part of the mind with contents "that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals."[10] The major characters of the most popular Westerns can be seen in terms of the four major archetypes, and their popularity can thus probably be partly explained by the fact that they strike a responsive chord in our subconscious minds.

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8. Lippmann, p.79.

9. Ibid., p.92.

10. Carl Gustav Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, trans. R.F.C. Hull, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, 9 Pt.1 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), p.4.

The three parts of the tripartite division of characters discussed in Chapter Three - the hero, the villains or savages, and the townspeople - are representatives of the self, the shadow, and the persona respectively. The fourth archetype, the anima, is usually represented by the heroine, who is usually present in the Western but normally plays a significant role only in vengeance variation Westerns where she talks the hero out of his quest for revenge.

The self, according to Jung, "is the mid-point of the personality, around which all of the other systems are constellated. It holds these systems together and provides the personality with unity, equilibrium, and stability."[11] A Western in which this stands out clearly is "Broken Arrow", in which the hero (Tom Jeffords) ends the war between the whites and Apaches, making it possible for both races to live in peace without either race being subjugated.

The shadow "typifies the animal side of man's nature...; when it is projected outward it becomes the devil or an enemy."[12] In the Western it is represented by the villains, a role filled by the bad Indian stereotype when the Indians are functioning as part of the tripartite division of characters and not just part of the background. This is particularly clear in "The Searchers", in which it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the heroism of Ethan Edwards and the villainy of Scar, Debbie's Comanche captor. The raid in which Debbie was captured and others were killed and scalped was, it transpires, an act of vengeance following the killing of Scar's own children: he tells Ethan, "Two sons killed by white men. For each son I take many scalps." In taking his revenge on Scar, Ethan scalps him. To emphasize the symbolism making Scar Ethan's shadow rather than a distinct character, director John Ford contravened his usual practice of using Indian actors and cast Henry Brandon in the role.[13]

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11. Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1957), p.85.

12. Ibid.

13. McBride and Wilmington, p.152.

The persona, in Jungian psychology,

> is a mask which is worn by the person in response to the demands of social convention and tradition and to his own inner archetypal needs. It is the role assigned to him by society, the part that society expects him to play in life...The persona is the *public* personality, those aspects which one displays to the world...
>
> If the ego identifies with the persona,...the individual becomes more conscious of the part that he is playing than he is of his genuine feelings. He becomes alienated from himself and his whole personality takes on a flat or two-dimensional quality. He becomes a mere semblance of a man, a reflection of society instead of an autonomous human being.[14]

This is often represented in Westerns by the townspeople, "Flaming Star" being a good example. Here, as suggested above, they represent the drive towards conformity normally found in a Don Siegel film. In general, as Stuart M. Kaminsky has pointed out,

> Siegel views society as a milieu which tends to accept conformity and unemotionalism. Society, as a larger unit, is taken over by pods, or consists of those persons who are unwilling to accept any feeling except a desire for non-involvement. Any social extension of unfettered action must be killed because the existence of society..,depends upon either conformity by the individual or destruction of the non-conformist. The townspeople of *Flaming Star* are perfect examples of society's basic need for conformity...[15]

Another film in which the townspeople are clearly representatives of the persona is "Broken Arrow", in which Jeffords' friendship with Cochise makes him an outcast.

The ego identifying with the persona can also be represented by the good Indian. In the light of the more sympathetic treatment of the Indians, the old type of good Indian who rejects his own culture in favour of that of the white hero and who recognizes his inferiority was, by the Fifties, something of an anachronism. To be sure, Tonto (Jay Silverheels) in the Lone Ranger films - "The Lone Ranger" (1956) and (to a lesser extent) "The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold" (1958) - bears traces of the good Indian stereotype in his devotion to the Lone Ranger

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14. Hall and Lindzey, pp.83-84.

15. Stuart M. Kaminsky, American Film Genres (Dayton: Pflaum Publishing, 1974), pp.192-93.

(Clayton Moore), but still associates with other Indians and does not appear to have abandoned his culture. Nor is he subservient in the presence of whites: in "The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold", his refusal to recognize his inferiority gets him beaten and shot. Nevertheless, while Tonto may display changes in the good Indian stereotype, he still serves as a representative of the persona or the ego identifying with it, for while one can match stereotypes with collective unconscious archetypes (at least as far as the Western is concerned), the latter are more flexible and wider in meaning, being the products of the unconscious mind. By a stereotype we mean a character who conforms to a few basic characteristics and is developed little or no further. An archetype, on the other hand, cannot be discussed in such precise terms, being recognizable from the effects it produces in the personality rather than physical or behavioural characteristics.[16] When we refer to a developed or multi-dimensional cinematic or literary character, we generally mean one who is more fleshed-out than the basic stereotype and who may not have all of the characteristics of the basic stereotype (such as Cochise in "Broken Arrow"), but who will nevertheless fit the archetype corresponding with the stereotype.

While the noble savage does not conform to any of the four main archetypes, he does conform to a less common one - that of the Wise Old Man, who

> corresponds to the psychic process whereby the contents of the unconscious move into consciousness in terms of and guided by the principles inherent in the archaic layers of the psyche. The Wise Old Man is understood as the personification of the voice of the age-old past in man as expressed in the deep unconscious.[17]

In other words, he possesses the wisdom of the ages or the accumulated knowledge of the past uncorrupted by the trappings of civilization. While the Wise Old Man is less common than the other archetypes discussed, he is closely related to the anima, both being personifications of the collective unconscious.

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16. Carl Gustav Jung, Psychology and Religion: East and West, trans. R.F.C. Hull, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, 11 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p.149.

17. Ira Progoff, Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), p.236.

Characters who undergo changes in the course of a film or novel change from representing one archetype to representing another. Common examples of this are Indian or Mexican women (such as Linda Darnell in "My Darling Clementine") who initially represent the negative side of the anima and serve as sirens enticing the hero away from the heroine. When they later die for the hero they become representatives of the ego identifying with the persona - good Indians. In films using such characters the heroine often functions merely as part of the persona.

While the Indians are justified in resenting their stereotypes, white Americans have always perceived them in much the same ways, and Indians have conformed sufficiently to the subconscious archetypes in terms of which whites have chosen to see them to make it unlikely that they will ever be perceived differently. In other words, while the existing stereotypes might undergo changes, as in the case of the good Indian, basically they are as close as whites, including the most sympathetic film-makers, are likely to get to an accurate perception of the Indians. The destruction of the Indian lifestyles and the assault on tribalism has exaggerated the problem in that many Indians who are proud of their ancestry and culture are forced to find out how to "be Indians" from white anthropologists[18] and white films and literature, with the result that they can be held up as proof that real Indians are exactly what whites always thought they were: militant Indians are seen in terms of the bad Indian stereotype, and those who are more friendly ("Uncle Tomahawks", according to the militant ones) are seen in terms of the good Indian stereotype.

The only possibility of any change from the existing Indian stereotypes would seem to lie with Indian film-makers, but the first film in which Indians were significantly involved on the production side, "A Gunfight" (1971), did not break any new ground in this respect. Although it was financed by the Jicarilla Apache Tribe, it did not concern Indians, and the only one to appear in it was an extra in a crowd scene. Yet even if Indians did make films about their

18. Deloria, pp.84-86.

tribes, it is by no means certain that more accurate screen images would result. The Black experience provides a useful illustration of this: the "blacksploitation" trend of the Seventies, in which Black directors made films about Blacks, merely replaced the old Southern stereotypes with a new set in such films as "Cotton Comes to Harlem" (1970) and "Shaft" (1970). However, if Indians do not produce films presenting Indians as they are, it is unlikely that anyone else will.

A final Indian complaint concerns the use of white actors. Considering that Indians reject the white American way of life and culture, one wonders why they are so anxious to participate in it. Nevertheless many, it seems, wish to be in films. The Fifties offered little hope in this matter, but in 1966 an Indian Actors Guild was formed to promote the use of Indian actors, to promote the teaching of dramatic skills, and to promote the training of Indians in stuntwork involving horses. While Indian performers emerged, such as Chief Dan George and Will Sampson, no major stars appeared. When asked for his advice on how aspiring Indian actors could get into films, Chief Dan George advised them to "Work hard."[19] Was the answer to the question of why no major stars appeared, then, that none were prepared to work hard enough, or were other factors involved?

The answer, perhaps, lies partly in the differences in outlook between Indians and white Americans. Indians in general do not prescribe to the Protestant work ethic, the usual means by which actors achieve stardom in Hollywood. The film industry is a very competitive one, and Indian socialization normally discourages competition and encourages co-operation with one's fellows.[20] As a result Indians are inclined to be community oriented, and are not inclined to seek individual success.[21] Poverty, too, has

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19. Chief Dan George, quoted in Ward Churchill, Norbert Hill and Mary Ann Hill, "Media Stereotyping and Native Response: An Historical Overview," The Indian Historian, II, No.4 (1978), 54.

20. Wilcomb E. Washburn, The Indian in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p.14.

21. Nancy Oestreich Lurie, "An American Indian Renascence," in The American Indian Today, ed., Stuart Levine and Nancy Oestreich Lurie (Deland, Florida: Edwards, Inc., 1968), p.191.

had an effect: Indians frequently display a lack of goals beyond mere continued existence.[22] This was reflected in a study of 743 applicants at the Indian Employment Centre in Minneapolis in 1968:

> Work interests reflected a rather low level of aspiration. "Anything" was desired by 27.1%; 29.9% wanted general factory or warehouse work, and 4.8% asked for driving and auto service jobs. Construction trades work was desired by 2% and household, domestic or hospital work was requested by 4%. Clerical and office work was sought by 3.2% and 19.4% requested miscellaneous specific occupations.[23]

Nevertheless, this does not provide the complete answer, for some Indians "have chosen assimilation and pride themselves in having beaten the white man at his own competitive, economic game."[24] Such an Indian is Dallas Chief Eagle of the Rosebud Sioux, who stated in 1970, "We desire intensely to belong to the American dream."[25] Another is Cato Valandra, who began the Rosebud Electronics Co. in 1967 with three employees and by 1970 employed 90 people.[26] Indeed, few whites could boast such an accomplishment. Such success stories, however, are rare in Hollywood, and when Indians or mixed-bloods have achieved stardom they have preferred to play whites, as in the cases of Will Rogers and Roy Rogers. To be sure, the former's roles were based on his own personality, but while he frequently referred to his Indianness, his image was that of a cowboy rather than an Indian.

Although Indian actors were common in the silent period, few were suitable for leading roles because, according to Iron Eyes Cody, "Indians have no tradition of acting or

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22. Shirley Hill Witt, "Nationalistic Trends Among American Indians," in The American Indian Today, p.61.

23. Richard G. Woods and Arthur M. Harkins, A Review of Recent Research on Minneapolis Indians: 1968-69 (Minneapolis: Training Center For Community Programs, University of Minnesota, 1969), quoted in W.T. Stanbury, Success and Failure: Indians in Urban Society (British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), p.263.

24. Lurie, p.197.

25. Dallas Chief Eagle, in To Be An Indian: An Oral History, ed. Joseph H. Cash and Herbert T. Hoover (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971), p.230.

26. Cash and Hoover, pp.113-5.

plays. Our culture consists more of ceremonial. There were very few Indian actors because we weren't conditioned to it."[27] This led to problems even when they were used only as extras, especially in battle scenes. Firstly, they were inclined to treat battle scenes as real battles. As Ernest A. Dench described it in 1915,

> the work afford them an opportunity to live their savage days over again, and they are not slow to take advantage of it.
>
> They put their heart and soul in the work, especially in battles with the whites, and it is necessary to have armed guards watch over their movements for the least sign of treachery. They naturally object to acting in pictures where they are defeated, and it requires a good deal of coaxing to induce them to take on such objectionable parts.
>
> Once a white player was seriously wounded when the Indians indulged in a bit too much realism with their clubs and tomahawks. After this activity they had their weapons padded in order to prevent further injurious use of them.
>
> With all the precautions that are taken, the Redskins occasionally manage to smuggle real bullets into action; but happily they have always been detected in the nick of time, though on one occasion some cowboys had a narrow escape during the producing of a Bison film.[28]

Amusing though Mr. Dench's writing may seem today, working with Indians was no joke for the white actors and extras.[29]

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27. Iron Eyes Cody, quoted in Brownlow, p.348.

28. Ernest A. Dench, Making the Movies (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), pp.92-3.

29. But cf. Brownlow, p.261. Brownlow dismisses such tales as press agents' inventions, apparently basing his entire argument on a statement by Thomas Ince that " (a) rousing their anger sufficiently to attack an enemy with any semblance of reality was one of the hardest things I ever had to tackle in my whole career in motion pictures." However, if, because of their lack of a cultural tradition of acting, they actually had to be angry to perform convincingly, it does not seem unlikely that they would be dangerous to work with. Nevertheless, even if Brownlow is right, the difficulties in getting Indians to act convincingly makes it hardly surprising that they were replaced by white actors.

Another problem with Indian performers in battle scenes was their refusal "to remain "dead" after being "killed" unless they were absolutely without ammunition, and then they would roll over that they might get a better view of the antics of their brothers."[30]

The behaviour of Indian performers off-camera also created problems. George Mitchell, in describing the Sioux employed by Thomas Ince, said "the Indians were averse to work, and they 'appropriated' such brightly colored props as rugs, blankets, etc."[31] Their salaries kept "them well provided with tobacco and their worshipped "firewater."[32] This "firewater" was frequently a cause of problems for those film-makers who employed Indians. The producer of "Hiawatha" (1913), which had an all-Indian cast, stated that "The Indian is all right as long as he works out of door and keeps away from fire water".[33] W. Douglas Burden, one of the producers of "The Silent Enemy", has stated that he was reluctant to allow any of his Ojibwa actors to leave the location as he "was very fearful that if any Indian left us and got to some town, he'd get as drunk as a skunk and that would be the end of it. We'd never see him again."[34] Thomas Ince was accustomed to getting complaints from saloon keepers in the middle of the night when Indians from his company got drunk and disturbed the peace.[35]

Nevertheless, the problems involved in using Indian performers still provide only part of the answer to the question of why Indian stars were rare. While drunkenness was a problem with Indian leads (such as Buffalo Child Long Lance, the star of "The Silent Enemy") as well as extras, it was doubtless possible to find Indians of sober habits.

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30. The Moving Picture World, March 4, 1914, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.73.

31. George Mitchell, "Thomas H. Ince," Films in Review, October 1960, quoted in ibid., p.123.

32. Dench, p.92.

33. Frank E. Moore, The Moving Picture World, March 29, 1913, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.104.

34. W. Douglas Burden, quoted in Brownlow, p.553.

35. Friar and Friar, p.123.

Probably the major factor involved was the birth of the star system which, when coupled with the involvement from around 1915 on of investment banking in the film industry, meant that only stars with guaranteed box-office appeal played leading roles. As Iron Eyes Cody put it, "the studios only put forward those names which the banks would put up money for."[36] It would appear, then, that the public did not find any Indian performers sufficiently appealing to make them major stars. Indeed, those who have become stars, such as Roy Rogers and even Chief Dan George, the most successful Indian actor of the Seventies, could easily pass for white. It is significant that Will Sampson, who is unmistakably Indian, has been allowed to play leading roles only on television, as in the made-for-T.V. film "Relentless". In theatrical releases he has usually been pushed into the background, most notably in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975), in which he played Chief Bromden: in the film Bromden was only a minor role, but in Ken Kesey's novel (1962) he was the main character and the narrator.

After 55 years of seeing whites in Indian roles, it seems that by the early Seventies audiences had come to view Indians as white man with slightly darker skins, and that Hollywood film-makers were afraid to tamper with that perception. Indeed, a common theme has been the similarity in appearance of whites and Indians. While it is true that whites raised as Indians could not always be distinguished from their captors,[37] Hollywood could have been more careful in its choice of tribes. Following the common assumption that all Indians are similar in appearance, it has evidently been assumed that any white man could be mistaken for a member of any tribe. However, this is doubtful. For example, it is extremely unlikely that Paul Newman could ever be mistaken for an Apache as he is in "Hombre" (1967), or that Kurt Russell could ever be mistaken for a Cheyenne as he sometimes was in the T.V. series "The Quest" (1976).

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36. Cody, quoted in Brownlow, p.348.

37. James Axtell, "White Indians of Colonial America," p.64.

Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that white actor Chuck Connors looked more like the real Geronimo in "Geronimo" (1962) than any of the Indian actors who have portrayed him.

Perhaps the most disastrous effect of the use of white actors in important Indian roles while real Indians were relegated to supporting roles, frequently as villains, was that viewers were given the impression that the only bad Indian was the real Indian. Yet if audiences do not express sufficient approval (via ticket sales) for Indians who do appear in films film-makers can hardly be expected to use them in important Indian roles, and, indeed, not all Indians have insisted that they should be. For example, in response to Jack Spears' comment that Indians resented the use of white actors,[38] an Indian (or mixed-blood) called Bernal Sierra wrote,

> Although where possible I like to see *real* Indians portray Indians, I do not resent white men playing Indians, as do some who also have Indian blood. Which is why I'd like to see Marlon Brando play Ira Hayes, the Pima Indian, in a filmization of V.B. Huie's story...[39]

Moreover, with the limited selection of Indian actors appearing in films, had these actors played all of the Indian roles available the problem of stereotyping would have been magnified. While stage actors might vary their roles, screen actors tend to play variations on the same role. Indeed, this is almost a prerequisite for stardom. To avoid the problem of stereotyping, there would have to be a larger selection of successful Indian actors than there have been to date.

Of the complaints discussed, all except the one that modern Indians are not used often enough as the subjects of biographies seem justified to some extent. Those concerning the portrayal of Indians as racially inferior and as inferior fighters and that concerning the failure to show the accomplishments of modern Indians are fully justified, and the others are at least partly justified, although there seem to be no solutions to the problems of Indian dialogue and stereotyping.

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38. Spears, p.33.

39. Bernal Sierra, Films in Review, II (1960), p.122. (The Hayes story was filmed soon after with Tony Curtis in the leading role.)

Having examined the individual areas of Indian complaints about inaccuracy in films, let us now consider the wider aspects of the topic. Firstly, anyone who has seen his race, culture or profession portrayed inaccurately on the screen can testify that it is extremely annoying, and whether or not one considers the complaints of Indians justified, it cannot be denied that they are understandable. A more important question, however, is whether or not inaccuracy is harmful. While numerous writers have claimed that it is, few have attempted to explain why. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Hollywood's portrayals of the Indians have created problems for real Indians, although the problem seems to lie less with individual films and their misinterpretations of Indian culture etc. than with the overemphasis on the Plains tribes. The Apaches and the Sioux appear to be Hollywood's favourite tribes, followed at a distance by the Comanches, the Cheyenne, the Navajos and the Kiowas. More passive, non-violent tribes, such as the Hopi or Washo have rarely been portrayed. Thus whereas many Indians lived in peace with whites while pursuing an existence based on agriculture, Hollywood has created the impression that they were all brutal savages who spent most of their time losing battles against whites. This has affected Indians in two major respects. Firstly, films have kept the image of the Indian as a savage in the minds of the Indians' white neighbours in the West, thereby fanning the flames of racial prejudice.[40] Secondly, Indian children often do not find their Indian heritage a source of pride since when they see their ancestors portrayed in films they are almost invariably losers. Indeed, it has frequently been observed that when Indian children watch Hollywood Westerns about Indian/white clashes they cheer for the whites.

Another way in which Hollywood's inaccuracy regarding Indians may be detrimental to real Indians is in its effect upon the assimilation/separatism issue: if the customs practised at a time was life was harder and more brutal for Indians and whites alike are shown exactly as they were, white audiences are likely to consider assimilation to be

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40. Spears, p.27.

the right course of action in much the same way that reports of modern anthropologists killed by cannibals make us feel that such savagery must be brought to an end. Yet if nineteenth-century Indian customs and culture are changed to make them palatable to white audiences, the impression is likely to be gained that assimilation has few obstacles. To give an example, even the most significant of the pro-separatism films of the Fifties - "Run of the Arrow" - was guilty of this. By stressing and exaggerating the similarities between Sioux and European custom and religion it undercut its message somewhat by creating the impression that if the Sioux could rid themselves of a few barbarous customs (such as torturing prisoners to death) they would be much like the whites.

Thus while there was, by the end of the Fifties, room for improvement, portraying nineteenth-century Indians with absolute fidenlity would not have improved the situation of the real Indians. Indeed, it would seem that even modern Indians find some of the habits of their ancestors somewhat barbaric, hence the tendency to assert that scalping was a European custom taught to Indians by whites. Moreover, apart from the danger of audiences viewing Indians as savages who should be assimilated at all costs, Hollywood faced several constraints against an accurate portrayal of the Indians.

Firstly, art does not seek to reproduce reality. Indeed, the aesthetic that art should recreate actual lives and events "would take art back to before the beginnings of art: it aims, ostensibly, to reproduce the raw material from which art derives."[41] While it should be recognized that the power of film creates perhaps a greater responsibility than that to which other art forms are subject, if film is to be considered as an art, it must be allowed to shape its raw material into an artistically pleasing form. The problem lies in deciding the extent of artistic licence. Few, one suspects, would object to minor or even quite extensive alterations to historical fact, such as the juggling of the order of historical incidents to give a more

41. Pauline Kael, ""Salt of the Earth," etc.," Sight and Sound, 25 (Summer, 1955), 53.

satisfying story line. Indeed, the National Film Committee of the Association on American Indian Affairs gave its blessing to such alterations.[42] The white-washing of heroes, too, is likely to meet with few objections as long as it is kept within reasonable limits: one can agree with Indian complaints about the way in which General Custer has frequently been turned into a champion of Indian rights by Hollywood (as in "They Died With Their Boots On"), but where a historical character actually did what is attributed to him in a film it does not seem unreasonable to foster audience identification with him by removing some of his vices. Tom Jeffords is a good example: "Broken Arrow" tells the true story of how he played a significant role in establishing peace with Cochise. The film's message of racial tolerance would have been seriously undercut if it had revealed that the friendship of Jeffords and Cochise grew from a trading partnership in which Jeffords gave Cochise ammunition in exchange for stolen cattle. It was not until "Soldier Blue"(1970) that supplying arms and ammunition to Indians gained any degree of respectability. However, when it comes to portraying the culture or religion of another race, at least some respect does not seem to be out of order. Film-makers would not distort the meaning of Christian rites and ceremonies to make them better fit plot demands, yet "A Man Called Horse" (1970) does just this: it presents an almost totally accurate recreation of the Sioux Sun Dance ceremony, but depicts it as a test of fitness for marriage when in fact its purpose was to "satisfy vows and promises made earlier in the year and to offer thanks for previous events.[43]

Nevertheless, while one may accept that a degree of historical distortion in the interests of drama is acceptable, Hollywood has, one might suggest, taken it too far. Was it necessary, for example, to invent a war between the Sioux and the Apaches for "Buffalo Bill" (1963)?

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42. Mantell, p.19.

43. Siminoski, p.219.

Catherine Marshall's experiences with 20th Century-Fox during the filming of A Man Called Peter, her biography of her husband Peter Marshall, sheds some light on Hollywood's view of historical accuracy: the first draft of the script contained less fact than fiction, and in her discussions with the producer and script writer she found that to them "fiction was as good as truth, provided it was plausible."[44] Where the Indians were concerned, film-makers had no reason to assume that they felt any differently: their complaints are not concerned with the accuracy with which historical events are portrayed. Indeed, at times they have been more of a hindrance than a help in this respect. For example, when "The Indian Wars" (1913) was being filmed on the actual locations and battle fields, the Sioux extras were reluctant to re-enact the battle of Wounded Knee where it actually took place because those killed in the real battle were buried there. While their desire to avoid desecrating a graveyard was understandable even to some of the whites involved in the production of the film, it did nothing to convince film-makers that Indians were interested in accuracy or, indeed, that it was a good idea to use real Indians in Indian roles.

A second barrier to accuracy in films, at least until the Seventies, was that it was uncommercial. Hollywood, which has been described as the Dream Factory, was precisely that: audiences sought escapist entertainment until after World War II, and even in the post-war desire for enlightenment a degree of Hollywood gloss was needed to attract audiences. Some evidence for this can be found in the fate of "Salt of the Earth" (1953), a film about Latin American miners. Director Herbert Biberman spared no effort to ensure the accuracy of the film, which was a financial disaster. To be sure, Biberman's left-wing sympathies prevented the film from obtaining a proper release, but had it had any evident commercial appeal one suspects a way of

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44. Catherine Marshall, To Live Again, (1957: rpt. New York: Avon Books, 1972), p.233.

getting it before the public would have been found.[45]

Where the Western was concerned it had long been known that audiences did not want to see the West as it was, but rather as the myth purported it to have been: Al Jennings, a former outlaw (or at least an apology for one), had made a series of silent Westerns (including "Beating Back" - 1914, and "Lady of the Duqout" - 1918) which were realistic and sordid, and which were so unsuccessful that they are rarely mentioned even in the most extensive histories of the Western. Almost a quarter of a century later the grimy and squalid West of "The Westerner" (1940) still proved uncommercial. Hollywood in the Fifties, having to compete with television, could not afford to risk its capital on potentially uncommercial ventures. Moreover, a totally accurate film would hardly affect attitudes towards Indians if it did not attract audiences. As Ruth Inglis pointed out, films "are made to be seen and can do little good unless they reach an audience in keeping with the high cost of picture-making."[46]

Another constraint against accuracy was the Production Code, which prevented the portrayal of some Indian customs. An example of this is the marriage of Tom Jeffords to Sonseeahray (Debra Paget) in "Broken Arrow". Apache marriages consisted of the couple living together for several days, then on the morning after the last night the woman would cook breakfast for the man and hang his bedding out to air. The man accepted her as his wife by eating the breakfast, then buying her from her parents or guardian.[47] In the context of the film this would have contravened the rule forbidding any attractive presentation of illicit sex, so it had to be replaced by a romantic ceremony. Also, in the same film, Cochise's cattle rustling activities had to

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45. The Hollywood view that accuracy was uncommercial was expressed clearly in a Musical called "Down to Earth" (1947), in which a muse (Rita Hayworth) from Olympus sees a rehearsal for a show depicting her inaccurately and visits Earth to get it changed. The result of her meddling is an artistic triumph but a box-office flop, and eventually it is changed back into its original form with her blessing, whereupon it becomes a hit.

46. Inglis, p.15.

47. Thomas E. Mails, The People Called Apache (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p.37.

be left out because, in addition to the reason suggested earlier, the code would have required that he be punished,[48] and the film's sympathetic aim would have been undermined.

A final constraint against accuracy, and one of particular relevance to the Indians, is the problem of portraying an alien culture in terms comprehensible to white audiences. This is illustrated by Adolph F. Bandelier's novel The Delight Makers (1890), which is based on anthropological data, and in which, according to Louise K. Barnett,

> The welter of clans, titles, people, and relationships becomes overwhelming: by insisting on long Pueblo names, Bandelier sacrifices readability for authenticity. This weight of explanation...ultimately sinks the fiction.[49]

It is also worth considering that when such an appearance of accuracy is accompanied by a racist white viewpoint, as in Bandelier's case, the results are potentially far more damaging than in cases where the Indians are blatantly unrealistic. Indeed, this was the reason why Indians objected so vehemently to "A Man Called Horse": if much of what we read or see is convincing, then it is easier to accept subconsciously the racist viewpoint.

Thus it would seem that total accuracy was neither possible nor desirable. Nevertheless, greater efforts could have been made in some respects. None of the above-mentioned constraints made it necessary to portray Indians as inferior fighters or as being racially inferior, for example. Why, then, was little attention paid to Indian complaints on such matters? Hollywood had always received vast numbers of complaints from ethnic and occupational groups objecting to their screen portrayals. As a result, film-makers had become somewhat impervious to protests: Joseph I. Breen, the director of the industry's self-regulation program stated as early as 1938,

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48. Inglis, p.157.

49. Barnett, p.192.

> If we paid serious attention to one tenth of one per cent of what looks like legitimate protest, it would be utterly impossible for us to make any pictures at all, or have any kind of villain unless he were a native born, white, American citizen, without a job and without any political, social, religious or fraternal affiliations of any kind.[50]

The Indian protest of 1958, then, had little or no effect on Indian portrayals. All it seems to have done was suggest to film-makers that they were wasting their time trying to make films that would please Indians. Moreover, the post-war concern for racial issues had lessened, and films dealing with them began losing money to the extent that in September, 1961 M.G.M.'s production chief, Sol C. Siegel, issued a staff memo banning the production of any more films of this type. Siegel added that he felt such films should be made - but not by M.G.M.[51] Consequently, in the face of continued Indian dissatisfaction with whatever came out of Hollywood and the lack of financial rewards, serious films about Indians were rare until the mid-Sixties. However, some notable films did appear, such as "The Exiles" (c.1961), a semi-documentary about three young Indian men living in poverty in Los Angeles, and "Cat Ballou" (1965), which reflected a literary trend of the Sixties (pioneered by John Barth's The Sot-Weed Factor - 1960) to parody and mock the Western.[52] Where the Indians were concerned it was another attempt to ridicule attitudes and stereotypes, but made a better job of it than usual. For example, in a fight the Indian member of Cat Ballou's gang (Jackson, played by Tom Nardini) grabs an opponent's hair which, being a toupee, comes off in his hand. He throws it to a shocked bystander who thinks it is the man's scalp. Later, when Cat (Jane Fonda) asks him if he wants to stay in the gang, he replies, "I get a kick out of being on the winning side for a change."

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50. Joseph I. Breen, quoted in Inglis, p.6.

51. "No Bad Film Endings," The Christchurch Star, 21 Sept. 1961, p.14, cols. 9-10.

52. Leslie A. Fiedler, The Return of the Vanishing American (1968: rpt. London: Granada Publishing Ltd., 1972, p.151.

From the mid-Sixties to the early Seventies two major factors led to further attempts to treat the Indians fairly - the gains made by Black militants and the Vietnam War.

CHAPTER VI

CATCH-22:1965 TO 1972

In the Sixties, the Black Power movement had a significant effect on films concerning Blacks. While films dealing with racial problems, such as "To Kill a Mockingbird" (1963) and "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner" (1967), did not always improve upon the self-conscious treatment of racial problems in films of the post-war period (such as "Intruder in the Dust"), Blacks began to be used in roles in which their blackness was coincidental and in which no racial themes were present, as in "Lilies of the Field" (1963), "Johnny Cool" (1964), "The Hill" (1965) and "The Green Berets" (1968). Indeed, such films outnumbered those dealing with racial problems. "Cotton Comes to Harlem" (1970) provided a further breakthrough for Blacks when it gained roughly 70% of its domestic rentals from Black audiences. This proved that films could be made for Black audiences and still make substantial profits. Consequently, it was followed by "Shaft" (1970) and others in which Blacks were able to choose the ways in which they were portrayed.

While Indians were not numerous enough to have films made catering to their desires without any concern for the reactions of whites, they nevertheless benefited from the actions of Black militants. This was probably partly due to a feeling that any improvement in the screen treatment of minority groups should be extended to include Indians. Another factor, especially from the late Sixties until the early Seventies, was the fact that Indians were more popular than Blacks: conservatives preferred them as they were less militant than Blacks, and white liberals, who had been eased out of the Black Power movement in the mid Sixties, were able to turn to Indians in their quest for an oppressed minority to support.

John Ford, whose "Fort Apache" had begun the post-war wave of sympathetic films, again started the ball rolling with "Cheyenne Autumn" (1964). About the film Ford said,

> I had wanted to make it for a long time, I've killed more Indians than Custer, Beecher and Chivington put together, and people in Europe always want to know about the Indians. There are two sides to every story, but I wanted to show their point of view for a change. Let's face it, we've treated them very badly-it's a blot on our shield; we've cheated and robbed, killed, murdered, massacred and everything else, but they kill one white man and...out come the troops.[1]

To get permission to make the film, Ford had to catch Jack Warner at "a weak moment",[2] and having done so he could hardly afford to risk box-office failure. Accordingly, he made some of the changes customary in adapting films from books, such as heightening the love interest and changing the characters to suit types common in the Western. In doing the former, he invented a sub-plot in which Little Wolf (Ricardo Montalban) killed Red Shirt (Sal Mineo), a fictional son of Dull Knife (Gilbert Roland), for stealing Little Bird, one of his wives. In fact, Little Wolf had two wives, neither of whom was named Little Bird, and the historical incident on which this sub-plot is based is one in which Little Wolf killed Thin Elk, long a rival for the affection of his wives, for flirting with his daughter, Pretty Walker.[3] The film's version of the incident almost led to a law suit from Little Wolf's descendents. (The idea was abandoned when their lawyer discovered that such cases were usually lost by the plaintiffs.) To make the characters fit the types normally found in Westerns, Ford had to invent a white hero and heroine as the main focus of the action. Indeed, the whole story was altered to make it loosely fit the classical Western plot. While in so doing Ford incurred the wrath of Mari Sandoz, who wrote the book, and the Cheyennes who saw it (and stated that the Indians neither spoke Cheyenne nor acted like Cheyennes), the film was a resounding commercial success: released in late 1964, it became, along with "Cat Ballou" (another sympathetic film)

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1. John Ford quoted in Friar and Friar, p.169.

2. Ibid., p.171.

3. Mari Sandoz, Cheyenne Autumn (1953: rpt. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1966), p.271.

and "The Sons of Katie Elder", one of the three most successful Westerns of 1965.

While the film told the true story of the march of the Northern Cheyenne from Oklahoma to their homeland, during the course of which they were imprisoned for a while in Fort Robinson (commanded by Captain Henry W. Wessells, Jr.),[4] Ford evidently intended it to have a more universal meaning: the acting, which many critics considered merely bad, is notable for its absence of histrionics. The purpose of this, suggested Gordon Gow - one of the few critics who liked the film, was "to put us at a certain remove, where, uninvolved yet constantly interested, we can relate the incidents of the story to our own times and reflect that human nature has scarcely improved."[5] In doing this, Ford began a new trend towards analogies. The Fifties had produced films in which Indians substituted for Blacks ("Reprisal") and Communists ("Arrowhead"), and in "Cheyenne Autumn" they substituted for Jews, Fort Robinson is made to resemble a Nazi prison camp, and Wessells (Karl Malden) is a cruel German. While the real Wessells performed all or most of the actions attributed to him in the film, he did so with the approval of his superiors, and was not without redeeming characteristics: he bought tobacco for the Cheyennes from his own savings, and saved the life of an Indian child by carrying her two miles or more on a freezing night after an attempted escape by the Cheyennes.[6] Ford had always treated the army sympathetically, and does so in "Cheyenns Autumn", making Wessells unrepresentative of the army as a whole, and making the hero, Thomas Archer (Richard Widmark), a captain who goes to Washington to plead on the Indians' behalf with Secretary of the interior Carl Schurz (Edward G. Robinson). Although it is probably unfair to lay the blame on any one faction involved in the affair, if one were forced to pick a group of villains it would most likely be the army chiefs of staff

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4. Ibid., pp.189ff.

5. Gordon Gow, Review of "Cheyenne Autumn," Films and Filming, 11, No.4 (1964), 27.

6. Sandoz, p.240.

in Washington, and General Sheridan in particular. While many of the army personnel in the West were sympathetic towards the Cheyennes, it was not an army officer but rather a newspaperman (George L. Miller, editor of the Omaha Herald) who made the plea to Schurz (although by letter, not in person). Yet while Ford recognizes the chicanery of Sheridan and his colleagues, he lays much of the blame on the newpapermen, accusing them of worsening the situation with exaggerated reports. Although he recognizes that they took the side of the Indians, he views their motives with cynicism: in the film one says, "From now on we're going to grieve for the noble Redman. We'll sell more papers that way."

A harsher indictment of General Sheridan came soon after in another film likening the treatment of the Indians to that of the Jews by the Nazis - "Custer of the West" (1967). In this film Sheridan (Lawrence Tierney) uses the extermination of the Indians to further his political career. He recognizes that the taking of Indian land is "plain robbery", but does not care. When Captain Benteen (Jeffrey Hunter) says there is no excuse for stealing their lands and breaking treaties, Sheridan replies, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian.,.The country's full of bleeding hearts."

As an Indian-hating hero would have had doubtful appeal in the Sixties, Custer (Robert Shaw) is not presented as the Indian hater that he was. However, he is not particularly sympathetic towards them. For example, he tells Sitting Bull (Kieron Moore),

> "The position is precisely the same as when you... took another tribe's hunting ground...That is the way things seem to get done...I'm talking about history. You are a militarily defeated people paying the price of being backward."

Nevertheless, he finds acts of genocide distasteful, as his memo to Sheridan after the Washita massacre suggests:

> Factors contributing to our success were:
> 1. the Indians were asleep
> 2. the women and children offered little resistance
> 3. the Indians were bewildered by our change in policy.
> P.S. Should you require any further contributions to

your election campaign, would you be so good as to let me know?

Your obedient servant,
George.[7]

Another film of the mid-Sixties, a re-make of "The Plainsman" (1966), used the "blend of sentimentality and nastiness...characteristic of Nazi propaganda"[8] to liken Custer (Leslie Nielsen), Wild Bill Hickock (Don Murray) and Buffalo Bill Cody (Guy Stockwell) to Nazis. For example, in one scene in which Cody learns that he is about to become a father just before a battle, he proceeds to kill Indians while singing a sentimental song ("When the Bough Breaks").

Indians did not seem to object to their treatment being likened to that of the Jews in Germany. Indeed, they have often used the same analogy in discussing the treatment of their ancestors.[9] What they did object to, however, was the tendency to portray Custer as being sympathetic towards them. When the American Broadcasting Company announced its 1967 television series "Custer", in which Custer (Wayne Maunder) was again portrayed as a friend to the Indians, numerous protests were made by Indians throughout the United States, and the National Congress of American Indians described Custer as a 19th-Century Adolph Eichmann. While the Indian protests were disregarded, the poor ratings received by "Custer" soon led to its demise, and the failure of "Custer of the West" or "The Plainsman" to equal the success of "Cheyenne Autumn" did not encourage film-makers to offer any more Nazi/Jew analogies involving Custer or Sheridan.

Indians, however, did not cease to be portrayed in films, and notable films continued to appear. One such film was "Hombre" (1967), which implies that the background of Russell (Paul Newman), a white man raised by Apaches and who has chosen the Apache way of life, makes him a superior individual to the whites around him. To have associated with Indians had always been an advantage for the Western hero, but Russell was the first hero to have

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7. This may differ slightly from the memo as it appears in the film since it was hastily jotted down during a television screening of the film and could not be checked.

8. Raymond Durgnat, Review of "The Plainsman," Films and Filming, 13, No.7 (1967), 7.

9. See, for example, Stan Steiner, The New Indians (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p.91.

renounced white civilization altogether in favour of that of the Indians. "Hombre" also showed something of the treatment accorded to reservation Indians in its portrayal of Alexander Favor (Fredric March) as an Indian agent who made himself rich by selling them dogmeat instead of beef.

Another notable film was "The Scalphunters" (1968), in which the Kiowas are presented as likeable scoundrels who force Joe Bass (Burt Lancaster) to "trade" his furs for a slave (Ossie Davis). The real villains in the film are the scalphunters - whites who kill and scalp Indians then claim the bounties on their scalps. The massacre of a party of Kiowas by the scalphunters is treated as a reprehensible act, and the scalphunters eventually suffer the consequences. While the scalphunters are presented as dispicable characters, there is no heavy-handed moralizing in the film, and the ending, in which Kate (Shelley Winters) does not object to being abducted by the Indians as they are "only men", is treated so off-handedly that its importance becomes apparent only on later reflection. Previously, as we have seen, the idea of a white woman abducted by Indians had led to a story about her eventual rescue, but the view that she does not need to be rescued (and does not want to be) suggests a recognition that the Indian, while being different from the white man, is not so alien that he need be eliminated or changed. Miscegenation between white women and Indian men was dealt with quite frequently in the Sixties and early Seventies. Although, as in the case of Ralph Nelson's "Duel at Diablo" (1966) and Leonard Horn's "Climb an Angry Mountain" (1972), it usually meant death for the Indian male and, if not, normally concerned only minor characters such as Jack Crabb's sister in "Little Big Man" (1970), it seemed that the barrier was lifting.

Indian legends (and psuedo legends), popular subjects with film-makers of the silent era, had long since fallen from favour. In 1967, however, the Disney studios produced a film called "The Legend of the Boy and the Eagle", which told the story of a Hopi boy called Tutuvina (Standford Lomakema) whose love for the eagle he has been taking care of in order that it might be sacrificed during the Niman Kachina ceremony causes him to release it, whereupon he is

banished from the tribe for a year, which he spends with the eagle, learning its ways. Upon his return he is still treated as an outcast, and one day when some boys tie eagle feathers to him and chase him he jumps off a cliff. Instead of falling, however, he turns into an eagle and goes to join his eagle friend. An extremely moving film, benefiting from magnificent colour photography and an outstanding musical score (by Franklyn Marks), "The Legend of the Boy and the Eagle" was, according to its narration, taken from a 500 year old legend. While this statement has proven difficult to verify, in view of the film's accuracy in its portrayal of the preparations for the Niman Kachina ceremony[10] and the customary care of the Disney studios when dealing with Indian matters, one is inclined to believe it. Being only a supporting feature, the film's contents did not have to be selected in accordance with commercial considerations. It is perhaps just as well that no-one has attempted a major feature based on an Indian legend, for the commercial demands would doubtless make the end result and perversion of the original legend and cause further Indian dissatisfaction.

In 1969, Vine Deloria declared that only three novels had portrayed Indians as they are - Hal Borland's When the Legends Die, Thomas Berger's Little Big Man, and Dan Cushman's Stay Away, Joe.[11] A film of Cushman's novel was released by M.G.M. in 1968. The plot of "Stay Away, Joe" concerns a Navajo family which is supplied with a bull and some cows as part of an experiment to see if it is worth-while setting up all of the Indians on the reservation as ranchers. (Historically this makes little sense as Navajo problems have tended to result from a surplus of livestock rather than a deficiency. However, this film is another example of the Hollywood tendency to use the names of only a few of the most famous Plains tribes: in the novel the Indians are Crees and Assiniboins.) During a homecoming party for Joe Lightcloud (Elvis Presley) a guest is told to "round up something to eat", and picks the bull. The trouble is compounded later when Joe sells the cows to pay for another

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10. The preparations for this ceremony are described in Frank Waters, Book of the Hopi (1963: rpt. New York: The Viking Press, 1969), pp.199-200.

11. Deloria, p.16.

bull and some home improvements. When it eventually seems that the family will be imprisoned for selling government property, Joe obtains the money to replace the livestock by selling his car piece by piece and winning a bull-riding contest.

Of the three novels mentioned by Deloria, it is significant that post-1972 discussions of Indians in films treat the film versions of When the Legends Die and Little Big Man as being of primary importance whereas "Stay Away, Joe" is rarely mentioned. The reason is that while the film versions of the other two attempted to preserve the spirit of the novels, "Stay Away, Joe" does not. It retains the basic plot of the novel (although in the film Joe does a lot of the things his father does in the novel), but the message gets lost in the slapstick. Whereas Cushman tries to explain the reasoning behind the actions of the Indians, the film makes them appear merely irresponsible. The killing of the bull is a typical example: in the film it is merely the mishap that causes the problem - the kind of thing one would expect to find in any situation comedy. However, in the novel it is used to illustrate the differences in outlook between Indians and whites. The cattle have been presented to Joe's father, who is half Cree and half white, and he is well aware of his responsibility to keep them. At the party he is also aware of the Indian notion of hospitality: he feels obliged to feed his guests, and his guests expect him to do all he can to make them comfortable. His Cree grandfather reminds him of this at great length. Eventually Joe's father asks, "They are saying that I am a cheapskate?"[12] and his grandfather replies in the affirmative. After much contemplation and soul-searching he eventually permits the slaughter of one of the cows.

The main problem was not that the Indians did not act like Indians, but that without the explanatory material present in the book any identification with the characters by white audiences was impossible, and, as the film was supposed to be a comedy, such material would have been out of place. There appears to have been little or no Indian

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12. Dan Cushman, Stay Away, Joe (Great Falls, Montana: Stay Away, Joe Publishers, 1953), p.52.

reaction to "Stay Away, Joe", but even if they liked it there are not enough of them to ensure the success of any film that does not make their outlook explicable to white audiences. Thus "Stay Away, Joe" offered further proof that accuracy was uncommercial: the presence of Elvis Presley ensured its profitability, but it was not one of his more successful films.

Another film to lose its message in its humour was "Flap" (1970), adapted by Clair Huffaker from his novel Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian. It dealt with the efforts of a tribe of modern Indians to prevent the construction of a highway through their tribal homeland, which already has a surfeit of tourist attractions. According to its makers, "Flap" was "dedicated to the unassailable fact that the contemporary Indian has been woefully neglected in this country."[13] While some critics liked it, the general consensus was that Anthony Quinn's playing of the leading role as a kind of "Zorba the Navajo", constantly pointing up the script's pleas for social justice with an extended forefinger, threw the film off balance. Stephen Farber, one of the film's kinder critics, wrote,

> Anthony Quinn is not too bad in the pivotal role of Flapping Eagle, but he is becoming a one-man UN gallery of irrepressible minority heroes. In one scene he even does a few steps of the little dance that has become his stock in trade since *Zorba the Greek;* at that point we know we're watching not a real Indian, but another of Quinn's ethnic star-turns on behalf of the Life Force.[14]

Others, such as Susan Rice, saw him merely "as a buffoon, a bumbling primitive".[15] Indian reactions, too, were less than favourable: one wrote, "This picture made a joke of Indian rights. We don't mind a laugh at ourselves but this picture made us look like idiots."[16]

In 1969 an Indian was again used as a substitute for a Jew in "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here", a remake of "The Curse of the Redman" (1911). Willie Boy (Robert Blake)

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13. Quoted by Susan Rice, "...And Afterwards Take Him To A Movie," Media and Methods, April 1971, 44.

14. Stephen Farber, Reviews of "A Man Called Horse" and "Flap," Film Quarterly, 24, No.1 (1970), 61.

15. Rice, p.44.

16. Akwesasne Notes, May 1971, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.266.

and his persecution represented the persecution of Jewish director Abraham Polonsky by the House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) during the Cold War. As it was in his role as a liberal rather than as a Jew that Polonsky was blacklisted, "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" serves as a transition from the films in which Indians substituted for Jews to those in which they represented Communists. Willie Boy, according to producer Phillip Waxman, "didn't want to be a 'Yassuh, boss' Indian on the reservation; he fights for his identity...We're saying that second-class citizens all over the world today are fighting for their identity."[17] In other words, Willie is not prepared to compromise. Likewise, Polonsky was not prepared to compromise in the face of HUAC, and refused to name any people who had engaged in un-American activities. Polonsky knew his refusal would lead to his blacklisting, and likewise Willie Boy knows he cannot win: when Lola (Katharine Ross) tells Willie, "You can't beat them," he replies, "Maybe, maybe, but they'll know I was here." Later he reflects, "One way or the other you die in the end." This idea was, it would seem, prominent in Polonsky's thought, as an almost identical line had been used in his best-known screenplay, "Body and Soul".

While the Mohawk publication Akwesasne Notes gave "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" a rating of "terrible", the film did not cause the storm of protest that "The Curse of the Redman" had. The main objection seemed to be the use of white stars: "The producer said he couldn't find any real Indians to play in this one. He couldn't find them because he apparently didn't look."[18] Although at the time there were no suitable Indian performers with sufficient box-office drawing power to play the main roles at the time, the casting does not seem to have been carried out with a great degree of sensitivity. The role of Willie Boy was originally offered to Robert Redford, who turned it down and took the role of Sheriff Cooper. According to Redford, he convinced the producer to look for an Indian to play Willie Boy but they could not find one.

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17. Phillip Waxman, quoted in Friar and Friar, pp.2-3.
18. Akwesasne Notes, May 1971, quoted in Friar and Friar, p.266.

Possibly the reason "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" attracted little unfavourable comment from Indians was that it departed from Hollywood tradition in two respects. Firstly, it is implied that Willie has had an affair with a female white ranch owner in Wichita, and is thus one of the few examples of a romance between a white woman and an Indian man ending with both parties still alive. While Willie dies at the end of the film, his death is not connected with the affair. Secondly, Willie is presented as a superior fighter to most of the whites. When he becomes involved in a fight in a saloon, none of the whites are prepared to tackle him. When Sheriff Cooper arrives after Willie Boy has left, the man who caused the fight by suggesting Willie return to the reservation says, "He tried to kill me," to which Cooper replies, "If he tried you'd be dead."

In other respects, however, the film shows how little progress had been made since 1911. Firstly, Willie conforms to the noble savage stereotype. He is being pursued because he has obtained his bride by killing her father according to tribal law but contrary to that of the whites - although the killing is done in self defence, Willie is not prepared to trust the fairness of the white legal process, especially when he has not done anything he considers wrong. Secondly, while lip service is paid to Willie's wilderness skills, they are not sufficient to enable him to elude Sheriff Cooper, who tracks him and catches him off-guard. The real Willie was concerned by half a dozen sheriffs and posses, not skilfully tracked by one man.

To make the film an analogy for his blacklisting it was necessary for Polonsky to smooth the rough edges off some of the characters. Since his quarrel was with HUAC and not society in general, he does not portray all of the whites unfavourably. This is particularly true of Sheriff Cooper. For example, at the end he allows Willie's fellow tribesmen to burn Willie's body. When Frank Wilson (Charles McGraw) tells him "the people've got to see something," he replies, "Tell 'em we're all out of souvenirs." His real-life counterpart was not so sensitive: he and his fellow lawmen posed for a photograph in which they stood by the

body, beaming like fishermen with a big catch. Willie, too, is changed from a man who committed a murder while drunk to one who killed in self defence and according to a tribal custom. Probably the reaction of any Western artist who feels he has been wronged is to produce a work of art portraying himself as a Christ-figure, and this is precisely what Polonsky did: Willie becomes a sacrificial lamb who is guiltless (by his own standards) and whose death satisfies the bloodlust of the racist whites among his pursuers, some of whom are old Indian fighters after one more scalp. Indeed, in this respect it bears such a remarkable resemblance to "Apache" that one is inclined to wonder if "Apache" was not based on the Willie Boy story. The major differences between the two - the difference in tribes, the fact that Massai does not kill his bride's father, and the difference in the endings - are easily explained: Willie Boy was a Paiute, and, as we have seen, at the time "Apache" was made it was not customary to use the names of such comparatively unknown tribes in films (although two films of the Fifties - "Kiss of Fire" and "Fort Massacre" - did depict Paiutes), and if a film was based on a historical incident involving such a tribe, the name of a better known Plains tribe was normally substituted. The other two changes are related. Had Massai killed his father-in-law, under the terms of the Production Code he would have had to pay the penalty. As in the end he was not killed or imprisoned, it was essential to make his crimes small ones, such as stealing supplies, and his stated intention of killing his father-in-law was not carried out. As "Apache" prepares the viewer for Massai's death, it is evident that when he lives it was a last-minute concession to the box-office (a wise one, it seems, as "Apache" was more successful than "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here"). Thus the main differences between the two films result from "Apache" changing its contents to suit commercial interests whereas "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" does not.

Whether or not Massai was modelled on Willie Boy, the comparison offers further evidence that little progress had been made since 1911: while "Apache" took a major step in introducing the first Indian hero in approximately forty

years, it merely took the screen Indian back to the status he enjoyed in the days of the early silents when Indian heroes were common. To be sure, the early Indian heroes were inclined to be noble savages, but then so was Massai.

Just as Willie Boy was a symbol for the leftist director of "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here", the Indians in Ralph Nelson's "Soldier Blue" (1970) were symbols for the left-wing citizens of another country - Vietnam. The film begins with an unprovoked attack by Cheyennes on an army payroll detail. When the commanding officer holds up a white flag one of the Cheyennes shoots him. The Cheyennes kill and mutilate all except Private Honus Gant (Peter Strauss) and Cresta Lee (Candice Bergen), who escape. The objective of the attack is to obtain the payroll so they can purchase rifles from Isaac Q. Cumber (Donald Pleasance). Cresta has been a captive of the Cheyenne and believes they have been treated unfairly, a feeling which she eventually succeeds in communicating to Honus, but not before he has found and destroyed Cumber's rifles. Upon returning to Honus's regiment, Honus tries to convince his commanding officer, Colonel Iverson (John Anderson), that a planned attack on the Cheyenne camp is unnecessary since he has destroyed the rifles they were expecting, and Cresta goes to the Indian camp to warn Spotted Wolf (Jorge Rivera) of the impending attack. The efforts of Honus and Cresta are wasted, for Iverson and his men attack the camp, ignoring Spotted Wolf's flag of truce, and brutally massacre the Cheyenne men, women and children. Having done so, the cavalrymen are praised by Iverson for "a job well done." He adds, "You men have succeeded in making another part of America a decent place for people to live...For the rest of your lives you men will hold your heads proud when this day is mentioned and you will say, "Yes, I was with Iverson.""

Ralph Nelson's stated intention was "to stir a national consciousness of the violence that was done to the Indians- a violence that is still being done,"[19] The idea came to

19. Ralph Nelson, quoted in Ralph Friar, "White Man Speak With Split Tongue, Forked Tongue, Tongue of Snake," Film Library Quarterly, 3, No.1 (1969-70), 22.

him when he saw the distorted view of the winning of the West presented in a text book his children were studying. While researching the film, he came upon an account of Chivington's massacre at Sand Creek in 1864 and decided to base the film's massacre on it. Several months later he read a newspaper account of the Pinkville Massacre in Vietnam, which the newspaper (the Los Angeles Times) likened to Chivington's, whereupon Nelson decided to do the same.

Nelson sought to pursue his analogy by giving the film a modern feel and portraying the characters as modern types rather than the nineteenth-century types found in John Ford films. This is particularly true of Cresta, who is a very "liberated" young lady. Her attitudes are those of the Counterculture of the 1960s rather than those found in captivity narratives of the Nineteenth Century: she sees white civilization as hypocritical and barbarous and the film supports her views. The worst hypocrite is Iverson. For example, after an outburst from Cresta he says that when he sees young people acting like that he does not know what the country is coming to, then goes out and massacres the Indians. Rather more subtle is the hypocrisy shown by several of the characters in the songs they sing. On his way to the massacre Iverson sings a song about freedom and the Union - a Union in which he sees no place for the Indians. When Cumber is taking his rifles to the Cheyennes, and again later when he is tracking Honus and Cresta with the intention of killing them, he sings about having a heart full of love. Even Cresta, who intends to marry Lieutenant McNair (Bob Carraway) for money (Like a hippie, she expects the society she rejects to support her.), sings a romantic Arcadian love song. The barbarity of the whites is amply shown in the massacre in which, in addition to slaughtering the men, women and children, they rape women and take dismembered limbs as souvenirs.

The Indians, too, are hypocritical and barbarous, but one suspects this is more by accident than design. Spotted Wolf says, "We want no war," and displays a medal and an American flag presented to him by the government, yet he has

perpetrated the atrocity for which Iverson's massacre is a reprisal. Also, his indignation when his flag of truce is ignored is hardly justified since he has done exactly the same thing at the start of the film. Yet in the case of the Indians one gets the impression that Nelson did not intend the irony. Rather it results from his rather crude handling of them: at the start of the film they are bad Indians, and at the end they are noble savages. Indeed, the brutality of the massacre at the start of the film seriously undermines Nelson's intention to show how the Indians had been wronged. After this massacre, the film reverts to pure propaganda, playing on the emotion of indignation and following the standard plot of propaganda films. Such films normally win the viewer's sympathy with "an idyll of quiet, harmonious contentment" which is then threatened by an outside force which seeks "to destroy it by some abominable means", whereupon "heroic attempts are made to defend it."[20] Honus's outbursts against the Indians who have killed his friends are used as spring-boards from which Cresta leaps to their defence by blaming their undesirable habits on the whites, who, according to her, taught them to the Indians. Eventually she manages to convince Honus and, Nelson hopes, the viewer. At this point we meet Iverson, who belongs firmly in the tradition of Hollywood racist whites, although in all fairness it must be admitted that he is only a pale imitation of Chivington, on whom he is based. We are shown Cresta being welcomed by smiling Indians while we hear Iverson, in voice-over, talking about "the dark abominations of these Godless barbarians." Learning of Iverson's plan to attack them, the Indians plan a defence in case their white flag is ignored. When Iverson's men charge, the Indians attack his flank but to no avail. They are slaughtered, their camp attacked, and most of its inhabitants brutally killed. After the brutality of the massacre, Iverson's speech contains an unmistakable irony, and to make sure the viewer has got the point the film

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20. Furhammar & Isaksson, p.57.

ends with a narrator describing the Sand Creek massacre. If "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" shows how little Hollywood's attitude towards the Indians had improved since 1911, "Soldier Blue" displays a considerable advance on the films of the Thirties and Forties, and even many of the films of the Fifties and Sixties. For example, the irony present in Iverson's speech when he praises his men for "a job well done" is completely lacking in a similar scene from "Garden of Evil" (1954), in which a dying Richard Widmark proudly lets hero Gary Cooper survey the surrounding terrain on which are strewn the bodies of a large number of Apaches he has killed. Cooper tells him, "You did real good," and the viewer is supposed to agree.

Iverson, as the highest ranking officer in the film, serves as a representative of the Government, which Cresta considers unfair in fighting a war against Indians in Indian territory where whites have no right to be . This, of course, corresponds with the view of many Americans concerning the war in Vietnam. This, then, is how Nelson makes his analogy. At this point one might ask how successful is it? Richard Schickel has claimed that "it doesn't really work, because history does not repeat itself in sufficient detail to make such analogies persuasive."[21] Yet where Vietnam is concerned, while the war was not to gain territory as the Indian wars were, it is not only liberals like Hippies who are inclined to see both in a similar way - as acts of white American aggression against more primitive races: conservatives, too, are inclined to see both in similar terms - as defensive acts against the threats posed by the Indians to settlers and the Communists to South East Asia. Therefore to at least some people on both the Right and Left the analogy is likely to be persuasive. Indians certainly saw the similarity: according to one Indian who served in Vietnam, "If you compare the War in Vietnam and the Indian Wars, you'll see they are the same...broken treaties, massacres, destruction of the land, and mass relocation."[22] Another veteran claimed that the Americans

21. Richard Schickel, Second Sight: Notes on Some Movies 1965-1970 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p.279.

22. Quoted in Friar and Friar, The Only Good Indian, p.258.

had destroyed the Vietnamese way of life by making them dependent upon American dollars rather than the land. Thus it would seem that to many people the analogy is a persuasive one. Yet it is hardly necessary for one to consider the circumstances identical for the analogy to work: the Sand Creek and My Lai massacres provide sufficient basis for such an analogy. The fact that such an incident, which shocked the American public in 1864,[23] could happen again after a century during which Americans considered they had become more enlightened renders the analogy one worth making.

In addition to reflecting a trend towards analogies, "Soldier Blue" reflected a trend towards attempts at realism. An easing of the restrictions of the Production Code (in 1966) had removed the necessity to tamper with history by adding "compensating moral values". Where "Soldier Blue" was concerned it enabled Nelson to portray the massacre in more realistic terms than he could have under the old code. Also, the effective shot in which Iverson's men ride over the American flag discarded by Spotted Wolf would probably not have been possible under the old code, which required that special care be taken in the use of the flag.

Where the Indians were concerned, attempts at accuracy tended to be misguided. This is largely true of "Soldier Blue", although it did make a couple of valid points. Firstly, the Cheyenne have released Cresta when she has decided she cannot make the transition from white to Indian. During her stay with them she has not been mistreated. While the Plains tribes were not as guiltless of sexual misconduct with white captives as they would now have us believe, it does not seem to have been the common practice that some writers, such as Alan Le May (e.g. in The Searchers), and film-makers have portrayed it as being. Secondly, when Honus is shot in the leg by Cumber, Cresta heals it with an Indian remedy. Whether or not the remedy she uses corresponds with a real one, Indian medicine in the Nineteenth Century was

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23. Ralph K. Andrist, The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), p.93.

(and possibly still is) in some respects superior to that of the whites. Indeed, only a few native "vegetable drugs known to science today were not used by aboriginal Indians, and the Indian usages generally corresponded with modern approved practice."[24] In other respects, the ethnology of "Soldier Blue" is sheer nonsense. One of the more obvious errors is the assertion that scalping was white-man's practice adopted by Indians. This view was stated as early as 1820, and has become increasingly popular over the last two decades, although no-one has attempted to argue it in a scholarly manner. It appears to have originated from the time (1694) the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts offered a forty pound bounty for Indian scalps, although no-one accused the whites of inventing it at the time. Indeed, there is overwhelming evidence for the Indian origin of scalping. Firstly, some of the earliest European observers who saw it had great difficulty in describing it in English, whereas the Indians had many expressions for the scalp, the victim of scalping, and the act of scalping. Secondly, the first observers expressed surprise at the discovery of a form of mutiliation that was hitherto unknown to them. Thirdly, had Europeans taught scalping to the Indians there is no reason why they should have tried to hide the fact, for by seventeenth-century standards scalping was a rather mild form of mutilation. Fourthly, scalping "was firmly embedded among other customs that could hardly have been borrowed from the European traders and fishermen who preceded the earliest European authors."[25] Finally, at prehistoric sites along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers skulls have been found bearing "circular or successive cuts or scratches" or lesions in cases where the victim had survived the ordeal and the bone tissue had partially regenerated.

Another example of faulty ethnology comes in the scene where Honus fights a Kiowa and wins but cannot bring himself to kill the Indian, whereupon one of the other Kiowas does it for him. Such parties customarily consisted of close friends and relatives, and rather than kill one of their number in such a circumstance they "would have

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24. Jennings, p.52.

25. Axtell and Sturtevant, p.461.

waited to relate how he had wiped out the disgrace by some brave deed in another battle or duel."[26]

A further misguided attempt at accuracy was "A Man Called Horse" (1970), which illustrated some of the problems involved in trying to portray anything accurately. About twenty-five historians were employed to ensure its accuracy in such matters as dwellings, artifacts, ceremonial paint, masks, and headdresses. The research started with trips to the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota in search of authentic pieces of weaponry, clothing and other artifacts as well as photographs. The initial results were disappointing, and have been described by production designer Dennis Lynton Clark:

> One grizzled brave brought (me) a faded poster of a Johnny Mack Brown cowboy movie with an Indian picture on it. Right away I knew we were going to have problems. The same thing happened with tipis. On the entire reservation, which is bigger than Los Angeles and Orange Counties combined, we couldn't find one Indian who remembered how to make a tipi the ancient way.[27]

Eventually, however, many artifacts and relics were provided, and those made for the film were, as Dan Georgakis, an otherwise hostile critic, admitted, "as genuine as research can make them."[28]

If it was accurate in its reproduction of artifacts etc., "A Man Called Horse" was anything but accurate in its portrayal of Sioux behaviour. Indeed, the basic premise of the plot - that Lord John Morgan (Richard Harris) would be treated as an animal - is suspect: it is more likely that he would have been given the respect accorded to Lewis and Clark a decade before the time in which the film is set. Also, although Indians did not wage war in the European manner, the film has a Shoshone raid resembling a U.S. cavalry attack. There are also numerous minor errors, such as the Sioux mounting their horses from the wrong side and the Sioux kissing in the European manner (a habit they did

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26. Dan Georgakas, "They Have Not Spoken: American Indians in Film," Film Quarterly, 25, No.3 (1972), 29.

27. Dennis Lynton Clark, quoted in Siminoski, p.109.

28. Georgakas, p.26.

not adopt until several decades later). Such errors were probably the results of assumptions it never occurred to the writers to question. Others, however, were deliberate and were made in the interests of the plot and sensationalism. An example of the latter is the sweat lodge purification ritual which Running Deer (Corrine Tsopei) undergoes before her marriage to Morgan: the main purpose of this fictitious ritual was evidently to allow the audience to see Miss Tsopei naked from the waist up. The most important of the changes made in the interests of the plot is the changing of the motivation of the Sun Dance ceremony from a fulfilment of earlier vows and promises as well as an offering of thanks to a fitness test. While the latter motivation is more satisfying dramatically, it reveals the way in which the importance of religion in Indian life has not been understood. Perverting the most sacred ceremony of the Sioux is somewhat akin to portraying the Christian Communion service as some kind of puberty rite.

"A Man Called Horse" is also inaccurate in its attributing various customs of different bands of the Sioux to the one band in the film. This suggests, perhaps, that Hollywood still viewed all Indians as being alike. The approach does not reveal a notable advance from that of the company filming "His Majesty O'Keefe" in Fiji in 1952: asked why Fijian singing, dancing and craftsmanship were being filmed when the culture represented was that of Yap, which was totally different, a company official replied, "That's how movies are made."[29]

Even the dialogue of "A Man Called Horse" is not all it appears. While eighty per cent of it is in a Sioux dialect, it is not used as a Sioux would use it. What the actors say is standard (or substandard) English dialogue translated into Sioux. For example, when Yellow Hand (Manu Tupou) brings Morgan to Buffalo Cow Head (Dame Judith Anderson) she asks him, "What kind of animal did you give me?", to which he replies, "It's a horse! What did you expect, a herd of buffalo?"

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29. "That's How Films Are Made," The Christchurch Star-Sun, 27 October 1952, p.4, col.6.

Yet the fact that millions of dollars were spent on research, artifact copying, costume design, and set construction suggests that the complaints about inaccuracy had been taken to heart. It does not seem beyond the realms of possibility that the liberties that were taken were a result of the discovery that few Sioux knew enough about their past customs to notice the difference. However, those experts and so-called experts who failed to volunteer their services when the film was being researched suddenly appeared to criticize the film when it was released. Indian reactions were generally unfavourable. The world premiere in Minneapolis, for example, was the subject of picketing, bomb threats, and civil disobedience, and the ticket office was blocked by supporters of the American Indian Movement, who passed out literature suggesting that every dollar spent on tickets represented a vote for bigotry.

Ted Simonoski, who has examined the film more objectively than most, believes that

> "A Man Called Horse" probably does not deserve such total vilification. It does contain levels of accuracy and historical veracity which are deeper than that found in most American Indian films. And it does present Sioux culture and society in a favourable and sympathetic way. Nevertheless, the depiction of the Sun Dance ceremony is terribly inaccurate and does indeed desecrate the Sioux religion. The bestiality and violence portrayed are never explained. The philosophy and system of belief which formed the basis for the ceremony are not presented in the film. The presentation of the dance clearly leaves the impression that the Sioux were savage, uncivilized, and brutal beasts.[30]

1970, however, was a bad time to be portraying Indians as uncivilized savages: for the first time in history an American President was speaking against "civilizing" the Indians. In 1968, during his election campaign, Richard Nixon had promised that tribes would no longer be terminated against their will, and when in office he asked Congress to "pass a new Concurrent Resolution which would expressly renounce, repudiate and repeal the termination policy as expressed in House Resolution 108 of the 83rd Congress."[31]

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30. Siminoski, p.226.

31. James Wilson, The Original Americans: U.S. Indians (London: Minority Rights Group, 1976), p.24.

Thus it was not the ideal time to remind white Americans how "uncivilized" (by European standards) the Indians had been, and one can see why Indians and liberals would want to discredit such a film.

Having made a film which was probably as accurate as it was possible for a big-budget commercial film to be, Hollywood film-makers must have been discouraged. Nevertheless, their efforts to treat the Indians fairly were not abandoned until a few more attempts had been made.

One such attempt was Arthur Penn's "Little Big Man" (1970), which was adapted from the Thomas Berger novel praised by Vine Deloria in 1969, and which Philip French has described as "perhaps the present highwater-mark in the treatment of Indians in the movies".[32] Dan Georgakas was rather less enthusiastic, but admitted that "Penn does break through to some new ground" and "goes out of his way to explain what counting coup means and to note other Indian customs accurately."[33]

The most notable aspect of "Little Big Man" was the casting of Chief Dan George as Old Lodge Skins. Originally Penn wanted Paul Scofield or Sir Laurence Olivier for the role and at one stage gave it to Richard Boone. Whatever the reason was for changing his mind, it enabled him to indulge in a little self-righteous criticism of the Hollywood custom he had originally intended to perpetuate: he includes the bit of the novel in which Jack Crabb (Dustin Hoffman) objects to the use of whites playing Indians in the films he sees on television in the Senior Citizens' Home.

However, good though Penn's film is, he sacrifices Berger's intentions in order to make another analogy for the war in Vietnam. Whereas Berger set out to remythologize the popular image of the West in the tradition of the tall tales of such figures as Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone, Penn sets out to demythologize it and show that whites treated the Indians badly and were now doing the same to the Vietnamese.[34] Thus Berger's amoral saga of the West is

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32. French, Westerns, p.93.

33. Georgakas, p.30.

34. In 1971 Penn stated that the film was a reaction to My Lai, and that he felt "that the nation must be reminded of such sordid episodes in its history if it were to avoid their repetition in the future." Dippie, p.139.

turned "into a vehicle of moral protest against the" war in Vietnam.[35] Like Ralph Nelson, Penn relies on standard propaganda techniques to make his point. Accordingly, whereas the Indians in Berger's novel are neither better nor worse than the whites, in the film they are sentimentalized to an even greater extent than Nelson's. For example, whereas Nelson's "Soldier Blue" admitted that Indians mutilated the bodies of their enemies, Penn's film avoids any direct reference to such a practice (although at one point Old Lodge Skins produces a scalp). At the same time Penn vilifies the whites, especially General Custer (Richard Mulligan). While Custer is a psychopath in both the novel and the film, in the novel he also has a charisma that is lacking in the film, in which he is merely another Iverson (e.g. before the Washita battle he tells a lieutenant that "the men are under strict orders not to shoot the women - unless, of course, they refuse to surrender."). Having turned the Indians into innocents victimized by the evil whites, Penn then disregards Berger's respect for historical facts and distorts history to suit his argument. Whereas Ralph Nelson chose to depict a genuine atrocity - the Sand Creek massacre - Penn depicts the Washita battle in a similar manner. Yet while the Washita battle was hardly an honourable military engagement, it was not another Sand Creek. Black Kettle and his associates desired peace but the young men wanted war, and the night before a war party had returned from raiding settlements in Kansas. Also, the village contained four white captives, at least two of whom were slain by Indian women in order to prevent their rescue.

To make the link with Vietnam, Penn changes Jack Crabb from "a character with substance and will of his own, not a hero who changes events but a hard-nosed citizen who adapts to the tumult without going underground", to a "modern Candide...overwhelmed by a dog-eat-dog world clearly meant to reflect the Nixonian America of 1970."[36] Also, to ensure the message gets across, Penn gives Jack a very

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35. Mark Bezanson, "Berger and Penn's West: Visions and Revisions," in The Modern American Novel and the Movies, ed., Gerald Peary and Roger Shatzkin (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1978), p.281.

36. Ibid., pp.276-77.

Asian-looking wife (Amy Accles).

Needless to say, Penn's view of the West is no more accurate than that of the films in which savage Indians attacked innocent white settlers. He replaces the army's self-view, which had been perpetuated by John Ford and others, with that of 19th-century liberals, who constantly criticized the army without recognizing that it was pursuing the same goal as they were - that of assimilation. Penn, like his 19th-century liberal counterparts, fails to recognize the problems faced by the army in dealing with the Indians. Firstly, the Indians did not fight in conventional ways. They were more inclined to use guerilla methods, and the only way to fight them was to use the same kinds of tactics, which usually meant waiting until the Indians got careless and attacking their villages by surprise, as in the case of Washita. When they attacked Black Kettle's village, the Indian women and boys fought alongside the men - a fact Penn chose to ignore. While it is easy to view the attack on the village as dishonourable since not all of the inhabitants were hostile, this illustrates a second problem faced by the army: it was not always possible to tell who was an enemy and who was not. Thirdly, the Indians aroused conflicting emotions among the soldiers. Seeing the results of Indian hostilities made it easy to see the Indians as savage beasts, yet encounters between hostilities showed the men another side of the problem - the poor treatment meted out to the Indians by frontier citizens and government officials. Also, as they came to know individual Indians, such as scouts, soldiers often learned to find admirable character traits in them, and did not relish the idea of slaughtering them. Thus Penn, by portraying the Washita battle as another Sand Creek, does the army a grave injustice, for the Sand Creek massacre was performed by short-term volunteers anxious to kill some Indians before their hundred-day period of enlistment ended. While the regulars were occasionally guilty of similar atrocities, such as Ranald Mackenzie's Remolino massacre in 1873, they were not typical, and it was customary to avoid harming women and children where possible.[37]

37. Robert M. Utley, "The Frontier Army: John Ford or Arthur Penn?" in Smith and Kvasnicka, p.141.

A more objective view of the army and its problems in dealing with the Indians was presented in Robert Aldrich's "Ulzana's Raid" (1972).[38] The problem of fighting an enemy who did not fight in conventional ways was illustrated in the need for Lt. Garnett De Buin (Bruce Davison) to rely on civilian scout McIntosh (Burt Lancaster) and Indian scout Ke-Ni-Tay (Jorge Luke) for advice on how to catch Ulzana (Joaquin Martinez), a renegade Apache who has left the reservation, and his companions. His military training has left him ill-equipped to deal with the problem of tracking an Indian whose strategy is, according to McIntosh, "pretty bright." When he acts on his own initiative, De Buin loses men, and eventually he comes to rely completely on McIntosh and Ke-Ni-Tay. It is these non-military personnel who devise the plan by means of which Ulzana is apprehended.

The problem of ascertaining who was an enemy and who was not was also dealt with, although not at great length. At the start of the film the Major (Douglas Watson) tells the Indian agent, "This time I want to know the names of the guilty parties: I do not want them slinking back and escaping the consequences again." Also, he does not know whether or not Ulzana and his companions are hostile. McIntosh assures him that they are and this aspect of the problem is not referred to again.

Dealt with at greater length is the problem of conflicting emotions regarding the Indians. As Robert M. Utley has shown,[39] the predominant view of the officer corps

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38. Philip French, in Westerns, takes the baseball game at the start of "Ulzana's Raid" as an indication that the film is another analogy for the Vietnam War:

> The effect of this organised game being played in the wilderness is absurd and melancholic; and it is quite clearly intended to make us think of American soldiers in Vietnam pursuing their curious pastimes in an alien land " (p.180).

While it is possible to read an analogy into the film, it is hardly necessary to do so as Aldrich, unlike Ralph Nelson and Arthur Penn, does not distort the realities of the West in pursuit of such an analogy.

39. Utley, p.140.

was that the Indians were human beings, but inferior ones, and that they needed to be assimilated into American society. De Buin, whose father is a minister in the East, displays the views of liberals unfamiliar with Indians: he believes that "they are men made in God's image like ourselves" and that therefore they cannot be vastly different. Upon learning of the extent of their barbarity his reaction is that common among liberals when the objects of their sympathy fail to act in accordance with their expectations, i.e. his latent racism emerges, and he takes out his resentment on Ke-Ni-Tay. By the end of the film, however, he has come to accept the Apaches as they are. Again, this is reflected in his treatment of Ke-Ni-Tay, whom he allows to bury Ulzana's body (like Cooper in "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here") against the protests of the corporal, who says, "they'd most like to see the body, Sir, or at least the head." De Buin replies sharply, "They'll see my report!"

The ambivalent views common among the lower ranks are aired by the sergeant (Richard Jaeckel) in a conversation with De Buin:

> De Buin: "My father's a minister."
> Sergeant: "So I hear tell, Sir."
> De Buin: "I wish I could ask him about the Apache."
> Sergeant: "What about them, Sir."
> De Buin: "Why do they do these terrible things? I mean, after all, they are men made in God's image like ourselves."
> Sergeant: "Lieutenant, it seems to me the...place in there (The Bible) that tells you about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the only fix you're gonna get on the Apache. That's the way we ought to treat them."
> De Buin: "Well, Christ taught us another way, Sergeant."
> Sergeant: "Yes, he did, Sir. But Christ never fetched no infant child out of a cactus tree and then waited around for two hours till it died so he could bury it, did he, Sir? Huh?"
> De Buin: "No."
> Sergeant: "I did. Ain't nobody gonna tell me to turn the other cheek to no Apache, Sir."

From this one can glean that he believes they should be treated fairly ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"), but has seen too much of their savagery to like them.

In presenting the problems of the army in dealing with the Indians more accurately than any of its predecessors, "Ulzana's Raid" was an important milestone in Hollywood's treatment of the winning of the West. As Jack Nachbar has pointed out, most cavalry/Indians Westerns have been celebrations of American progress in which the destruction of the Indians (or at least their way of life) has been inevitable, if unfortunate. Others, such as "Little Big Man" and "Soldier Blue", have viewed the white settlement of the West as violent conquest and progress as a "heartless and cruel incursion."[40]

Aldrich accepts neither view. The frontier army is not portrayed as "the heroic vanguard of civilization, crushing the savages and opening the West to settlers."[41] At times the soldiers are no more "civilized" than the Apaches, as in the scene where several mutilate the body of Ulzana's son. Indeed, one might argue that it was worse for troopers to perform such atrocities as they had no cultural justification for it. As McIntosh points out, when white men behave like Indians it "kind of confuses the issue". Later, after witnessing the results of another of Ulzana's atrocities, De Buin says, "Killing Ulzana now is no more than justice." McIntosh replies, "Don't be confused, Lieutenant; we're not in the justice business."

At the same time, Aldrich does not portray the army as a "barbaric band of butchers, eternally waging unjust war against unoffending Indians".[42] The oversimplified views of Eastern liberals who did not actually come into contact with Indians are criticized: when De Buin tells the Major that his father believes that "a lack of Christian feeling towards the Indian" is "at the root of our problem with them," the Major replies, "From a pulpit in Philadelphia that's an easy mistake to make." While the film is not critical of Christianity - the hero McIntosh is a kind and tolerant man who reads the Bible - it shows the inadequacy

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40. Jack Nachbar, "Ulzana's Raid (1972)," in Western Movies, ed, William T. Pilkington and Don Graham (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), p.141.

41. Utley, p.142.

42. Ibid.

of the 19th-century humanitarian view that if the Indians were treated kindly they would abandon their savage ways and become good American citizens. By the end of the film De Buin has discovered that it is not quite as simple as that, and without doing anything we would consider un-Christian today he bends his principles (e.g. in leaving McIntosh to die rather than forcing him to endure an agonizing and inevitably fatal ride back in the wagon in order that he might have a proper Christian burial) to suit the Western environment.

Aldrich also points out that it was not massacres perpetrated by the army that destroyed the Indians as Ralph Nelson and Arthur Penn and others have suggested. Rather it was the policy of the liberal humanitarians which the army had to enforce that was responsible: by herding the Indians onto reservations, forcing them to change their ways of life, undermining the authority of their leaders, and generally turning them into second-class citizens, their systems of social control and their self respect vanished.[43] In a conversation between De Buin and Ke-Ni-Tay, Aldrich makes it clear that this is the reason for Ulzana's actions: Ke-Ni-Tay explains that by killing a man slowly one can get his power, a necessity in "this land". Ulzana, he says, has been at the agency for a long time and his power is "very thin. Smell in his nose are old smell of agency - old smell: smell of woman, smell of dog, smell of children. Man with old smell in the nose is old man." Ulzana has left in search of new smells - "pony running, the smell of burning, the smell of bullet". He wants to kill many men to take their power. Aldrich does not suggest that he has the right to murder settlers. He merely explains why he does it without attempting any facile answers at the moral questions involved. Indeed, Aldrich recognizes the futility of trying to answer questions to which there are no answers. McIntosh expresses the film's viewpoint at the end when he says to De Buin, "Hell, Lieutenant, ain't none of us right." Aldrich has, to date,

43. Wilcomb E. Washburn, The Indian In America (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p.42.

had the last word on the subject: no major Western since has tackled the problem.

The Indian complaint that modern Indians were not portrayed in films was rectified in the early Seventies, when a number of films dealing with modern Indians were made. "Run, Simon, Run" (1970) dealt with a love affair between Simon (Burt Reynolds), an Indian, and Carol (Inger Stevens), a white woman who likes to help Indians because it makes her "feel superior." While, as mentioned earlier, Simon is killed at the end, the film does show something of the way some Indians pervert their culture for the amusement of whites. For example, at a white party Simon is asked to perform a war dance. He replies, "That's a little difficult: we haven't had a war for about 68 years." When asked for a rain dance instead, he asks, "Do you need rain?" He then explains the importance of the dances to his culture.

In the late Fifties, a young actor called Tom Laughlin was horrified by what he saw on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, such as "people living in tar paper shacks and in abandoned automobiles" and babies sleeping in trunks. He was also shocked by stories he heard about how the local whites treated the Indians. For example, "some guys bragged of how they followed Indians who had received their flour allotment and broke the bags over their heads".[44] What Laughlin saw and heard germinated in his mind and emerged, in 1971, as "Billy Jack", a sincere depiction of the life of present-day Indians. More of a popular success than a critical one, "Billy Jack" has so far had two sequels - "The Trial of Billy Jack" (1974) and "Billy Jack Goes To Washington" (1977), the latter being a remake of Frank Capra's "Mr. Smith Goes To Washington" (1939) produced by Frank Capra,Jr.

"Climb an Angry Mountain" (1972) concerns the efforts of Eli Cooper (Fess Parker), a small town sheriff, to capture Indian criminal Joey Chilco (Joe Kapp) and ensure he receives just treatment from the law before city detective

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44. Tom Laughlin (Interview with Beverly Walker), "Billy Jack Vs. Hollywood," Film Comment, July/August 1977, 28.

Frank Bryant (Barry Nelson) gets to him. Like "Tell Them Willie Boys Is Here", "Climb an Angry Mountain" deals with the conflicts between Indian customs and the white man's law.

In 1972, the third of the three novels praised by Vine Deloria was filmed: Stuart Millar, the producer of "Little Big Man", directed an adaption of Hal Borland's When the Legends Die (1963), which concerns the Indian failure to observe the Protestant work ethic, one of the Indian characteristics which disturbed the Puritans. Thomas Black Bull (Frederic Forrest), a teenage Ute Indian who lived on his own in the wilderness before being taken to a boarding school for reservation Indians, is trained as a rodeo rider by Red Dillon (Richard Widmark). Although as a child he has loved animals and had a rapport with them, he has difficulty in adjusting to the lifestyle and values of the whites and takes out his frustration on the horses he rides and gains a reputation as a killer of horses. While he is successful, he can be only by betraying his true self. Eventually he gives up his career and returns to the wilderness.

The film is a generally faithful adaption of the spirit if not the narrative, of the middle two sections of the novel, although it exaggerates or at least makes more blatant the racism experienced by Tom by means of stock Hollywood racists. For example, in a bar scene which has no equivalent in the novel (but resembles one from "Devil's Doorway") one of the whites says, "I don't mind Indians when I'm sober, but when I'm drunk my sense of smell improves." Red Dillon, in the novel, is not untainted by the racism of his acquaintances, but this is amplified in the film: at first he is patronising, as after their first big win. Showing Tom the money, he says, "Much wampum, Chief." Later he becomes more vicious and spells out his feelings towards Tom - "You ain't nothing but meat - Red meat."

Of the above-mentioned films, a few received degrees of grudging approval from Indians in between the complaints and protests, but none appears to have been greeted with glad cries. Indian indignation about Hollywood's false portrayals of them, their religions and their cultures is understandable and, as we have seen, the films of the late

Sixties and early Seventies still left plenty of room for improvement. Unfortunately, however, the terms and ways in which disapproval has been expressed by Indians and by sympathetic whites (such as Ralph and Natasha Friar) has revealed a failure to appreciate or even try to understand the economics of film-making, and has had a disastrous effect. Many of the films of the Fifties and Sixties, and virtually all of the films of the early Seventies revealed a basic change in outlook which Hollywood's critics failed to recognize. While in the early Sixties few sympathetic films were made because films about racial problems were losing money, this was not the case in the early Seventies. "Little Big Man", for example, was one of the three top-grossing Westerns of 1971. "Soldier Blue" is still making money, "Ulzana's Raid" was successful at the time of its release, and "A Man Called Horse" was sufficiently successful to spawn a sequel.

It would seem, then, that film-makers realized that it was impossible to satisfy the Indians and gave up trying.

CHAPTER VII

BACK TO THE BEGINNING: 1973 TO 1981

By 1973, the Indians were displaying an increasing interest in politics, both at a tribal and national level. Groups like the Creek Centralization Committee and the Navajo Rights Association were trying to elicit a greater response from tribal governments, and the National Congress of American Indians sought "wider constituency and to include more Indian groups in its membership."[1] While the gains made by Blacks had led to a greater concern for the Indians, well-meaning whites still assumed, as they always had, that Indian goals and problems were the same as those of the Blacks and were surprised to learn that Indians did not wish to shed their culture and become like white Americans. In 1964, for example, previously sympathetic whites attended a Wisconsin conference at which some Indian speakers expressed their views. Having heard what these speakers had to say, the whites described them as "Red Muslims". Some liberals, like their nineteenth-century counterparts, continued to do what they considered best for the Indians with little concern for Indian viewpoints. Senator Jackson of Washington was such a person. While conservative politicians like Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater and Paul Fannin worked on behalf of the Indians and in accordance with Indian requests,[2] they made little headway. Nixon's efforts to end termination were blocked by Congress and unfortunately his presidency came to an end before he could push it through.

The more liberals came into contact with Indians, or at least with those described by Clyde Warrior as "Angry Nationalists",[3] the more their sympathy evaporated. To be

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1. Joyopaul Chaudhuri and Jean Chaudhuri, "Emerging American Indian Politics: The Problem of Powerlessness," in Chicanos and Native Americans: The Territorial Minorities, ed. Rudolph O. de la Garza, A. Anthony Kruszewski, and Tomás A. Arciniega (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, inc., 1973), p.111.

2. Ibid., p.112.

3. Clyde Warrior, "Which One Are You?: Five Types of Young Indians," in Steiner, p.306.

fair, however, this type of Indian has little appeal to anyone, liberal or conservative, and does little to improve the lot of Indians. A television documentary, "The New Indians" (1976), attempted to correct the unfavourable impression created by these militants: it shows ordinary Indians, who emerge as likeable, pleasant people, and expresses the concern of many elders about the American Indian Movement, which is inciting the young to ill-advised actions. At one point in the film an activist from this organization comes to a reservation to make a speech. Unlike the other Indians shown, he is a sullen, unsmiling character. While there is no reason why Indians should behave as smiling "Uncle Tomahawks", it seems a pity that their causes should be hampered by militants who are unrepresentative of their races.[4]

White sympathy evaporated further after a major demonstration at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. In September, 1974, Marlon Brando and Abby Mann announced that they were preparing a film on the subject. The film, however, never appeared, presumably because those controlling the purse-strings sensed that public sympathy for Indians had passed its peak. This, coupled with the fact that Indians had not appreciated the attempts to portray them fairly and accurately, would seem to be responsible for the subsequent lack of films about Indians. Disinclined to portray Indians in sympathetic terms for the above reasons and, according to Richard Schickel, afraid to portray villains who were not "racially indistinct" or at least uncontroversial,[5] Hollywood tended to avoid portraying Indians for a few years. Thus the television series "The Quest" (1976), which was about two brothers searching for their sister captured by Cheyennes, contained few episodes which actually dealt with Indians. Even "A Gunfight", a film financed by Apaches, did not risk financial failure by flogging what was a dead or at least a hibernating horse. The most significant example was "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest".

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4. Ibid., pp.306-7.
5. Richard Schickel, "Why Indians Can't Be Villains Any More," New York Times, 9 February 1975, Sec.2, p.15.

Ken Kesey's novel is in the tradition of those stories dealing with a white man and his companion from a minority group. In the past, the companion had customarily died before the white man, as in Herman Melville's Moby Dick, William Faulkner's Go Down, Moses, and even Thomas Berger's Little Big Man (although not in the film version).[6] Kesey's Chief Bromden did not: at the end, after a labotomy has been performed on his white friend McMurphy, he kills McMurphy rather than have him live as a reminder of what happens when one goes against the system, then escapes. Thus the white hero dies, but his Indian companion survives. While this is not changed in the film, Bromden is reduced to a minor character. When asked why the story was no longer told from Bromden's point of view as in the novel, director Milos Foreman stated,

> I didn't want that for my movie...I hate that voice-over, I hate that whole psychedelic 1960s drug free-association thing, going with the camera through somebody's head. That's fine in the book, or on a stage, which is stylized. But in film the sky is real, the grass is real, the tree is real; the people had better be real too.[7]

While his elimination of the Indian's narration is in line with the normal trend to remove what is not pictorial when adapting a novel to the screen, it is hardly an adequate reason for almost writing Bromden out of it. Thus, in addition to the lack of an Indian actor of sufficient status (as discussed in chapter five), Foreman's film seems to reflect the contemporary fear of dealing with the Indians on the screen.

When Indians were portrayed in theatrical films of the mid and late Seventies, the roles were rarely more than cameos, such as those in "Blazing Saddles" (1974), Wanda Nevada" (1979) and "Alligator" (1980). Generally, however, film-makers set their Westerns at the end of the frontier period when the Indians were no longer a problem and could be avoided, or else replaced them with Latins. Indeed, as early as 1960 Latins began taking over the role of the bad

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6. Fiedler, pp.182-83.

7. Milos Foreman, quoted in Molly Haskell, "Kesey Cured: Foreman's Sweet Insanity," in Peary and Shatzkin, p.271.

Indian, as in "The Magnificent Seven" (1960), "The Savage Guns" (1962), "Bandolero" (1968) and "Guns of the Magnificent Seven" (1969). That Latins were substitutes for Indians was especially clear in "Bandolero", in which the Mexicans act like Indians: posse leaders July Johnson (George Kennedy) and Roscoe Bookbinder (Andrew Prine) find one of their men dead, stripped and mutilated in the manner normally associated with Indians. Roscoe's initial reaction is that Indians are responsible for the atrocity, but July informs him that the culprits are Mexican bandits. "The Undefeated" (1969) adapted an old theme in which Union and Confederate troops united against Indians (e.g. in "Escape from Fort Bravo" and "Major Dundee") to one in which post-Civil War Yankees, Confederates and Indians united against Mexicans. In "The Quest", aggressive Indians always had motives whereas Mexican bandits did not.

When a good Indian was wanted for "The Legend of the Golden Gun" (1979), a thinly disguised version of the Lone Ranger legend (and an infinitely superior rendition of it to the 1981 version of that story), the Tonto role was taken by a Black (Carl Franklin).

Another way of avoiding the Indians was to put Western stories into other genres. However, in the mid-Seventies film-makers, as mentioned above, seemed afraid to use any villains who were not white. This fear manifested itself in disaster films, such as "The Poseidon Adventure" (1972) and "Earthquake" (1974), in which it was not necessary to have a villain at all (although in some of them, such as "The Towering Inferno", the disasters were caused by less than honourable actions by some of the protagonists).

In 1978 a further solution was found to match a growing conservatism that was gripping America and that ultimately led to the election of Ronald Reagan as President: James Fenimore Cooper's The Deerslayer served as the basis for "The Deer Hunter". While "The Deer Hunter" can hardly be considered an adaption of The Deerslayer, it nevertheless draws upon the same tradition - the captivity narrative. Like many of the captivity narratives, "The Deer Hunter" begins with a peaceful life in an American town which is then disturbed, in this case by the Vietnam War. In Vietnam some of the town's young men are captured by Viet

Cong. Like the protagonists in the captivity narratives (and like Natty Bumppo in The Deerslayer), they escape, and one of the survivors returns to his home town. As in the captivity narratives, his return to society can never be complete as he is permanently scarred by his experiences. In "The Deer Hunter" the Viet Cong are clearly substitutes for the bad Indian stereotype. They are totally despicable with no redeeming features, and torment their American captives in a manner very similar to that in which Natty Bumppo is tormented by the bad Hurons who capture him in The Deerslayer.

At the time it seemed likely that more films would offer similar reassessments of Vietnam and reverse the trend in which Indians served as substitutes for the Viet Cong in liberal films which saw the Vietnam War as yet another example of white American imperialism. Such a new trend, however, has not emerged, possibly because the standard Western plots do not lend themselves to war films. Admittedly the professional plot can and has been used in war films (e.g. "The Dirty Dozen" - 1967), and the idea of a group of heroes has superficial similarities to that of a troop of soldiers. Nevertheless, the heroes of a professional Western usually fight for money, not out of any sense of loyalty to the society they are defending, whereas while the soldiers in a war film also receive remuneration their reasons for fighting are usually patriotic.

A more permanent solution to the problem of how to avoid the Indians has been the science fiction film. By splicing the Western and science fiction genres together, the problems of both genres have been solved. In the past, science fiction films, and in particular the one considered by many to be the outstanding example of the genre - "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968), have been accused of having "too little fantasy-on the cowboys and Indians level-to suit some viewers."[8] At the same time, apart from the problem of how to portray the Indians, the Western had, by 1972, "used up the mythological space of the West" and a need was felt to "re-establish the West" somewhere else.

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8. Stan Darling, "2001...Big Daddy of Space Films Returns," The Press, 9 September 1978, p.14, Col.1.

"Maybe", suggested Leslie Fiedler,

> the moon will serve our purposes, or Mars; maybe up and out will turn out to be a true archetypal equivalent to the Way West, as we have already begun to surmise, calling some of the literature of space adventure 'space operas', on the model of 'horse operas', which is to say, Westerns.[9]

Not surprisingly, then, the two genres were merged. Particularly obvious examples are "Battle Beyond the Stars", "Battlestar Galactica", and "Buck Rogers in the 25th Century". "Battle Beyond the Stars" is a remake of "The Magnificent Seven", and "Battlestar Galactica" (both the feature film and subsequent television series) is a remake of the "Wagon Train" series of the late Fifties and early Sixties, with the latter's wagon boss Seth Adams (Ward Bond) replaced by Commander Adama (Lorne Greene, whose most famous role is that of Ben Cartwright in the Western series "Bonanza" and who is thus thought of as a Western hero). While it would be going too far to suggest that Buck Rogers is a new Lone Ranger, he nevertheless has (starting with the 1980 series) a "Tonto" - a Birdman (which means that instead of hair on his head he has feathers which might well be taken to represent an Indian head-dress) called Hawk (Thom Christopher). Hawk is a noble savage whose race has been the object of genocide on Earth and elsewhere, with the result that he is the last known survivor. Thus he is an ideal representative of the "vanishing American". At the same time, by using imaginary races from other planets as villains, the makers of science fiction films are not subject to complaints from Indians or any other group.

However, the Indians have been dealt with extensively in a few films, most notably in "The Return of a Man Called Horse" and "Buffalo Bill and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson" (both 1976). The former is a sequel to "A Man Called Horse" and hardly needs discussion at this point as it merely repeats the merits and defects of the original.

"Buffalo Bill and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson", suggested by Arthur Kopit's play Indians (1969),

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9. Fiedler, p.25.

offers an interesting example of how history can be distorted in a film which tries to get behind the myth. Indeed, after viewing this film, which conveys an air of realism while creating a totally false impression, one can see why the Sioux objected to "A Man Called Horse". It was directed and co-written (with Alan Rudolph) by Robert Altman, who, after making the successful "M.A.S.H." (1970), proceeded to attack the American Dream and the popular view of American history in films such as "Nashville" (1975) and this one. Unfortunately, whereas "Nashville" as a perceptive and accurate assessment of the country music business, "Buffalo Bill and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson" is as mythological as the myth he is attacking. For example, Altman portrays William "Buffalo Bill" Cody (Paul Newman) as an arrogant poseur obviously incapable of any of the feats attributed to him. When he thinks Sitting Bull (Frank Kaquitts) and his interpreter, Halsey (Will Sampson), have deserted him, Cody organizes a posse to bring them back. His effort is a farce: he does not catch sight of the Indians, despite the fact that they are not trying to elude him and have merely left temporarily for a religious observance. Ned Buntline (Burt Lancaster) is responsible for his reputation to the extent that Cody finds it uncomfortable to have Buntline near him to remind him of the fact. When Buntline leaves, he says, "It's been the thrill of my life to have invented ya."[10]

Arthur Kopit was not quite so unkind. While he portrays Cody as a braggart, he does not attempt to belittle his accomplishments. Rather, he avoids the issue, and presents Cody as a well-meaning but not over-intelligent character who sees his performing activities as "not being false to what" he was, but simply drawing on it "and raisin' it to a higher level."[11] The real Cody had a considerable reputation as a scout and was Chief of Scouts of the Fifth Calvalry before he met Ned Buntline, and in 1872 was awarded

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10. Alan Rudolph and Robert Altman, Buffalo Bill and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1976), p.138. Future quotes will be taken from this edition of the script. They may differ slightly from what was actually said in the film.

11. Arthur Kopit, Indians (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), p.42. All future quotes will be from this edition.

the Congressional Medal of Honour for "a courageous action" while serving as a scout for the Third Cavalry.[12]

According to Altman's film, Cody did not like Sitting Bill and the two never actually spoke to each other, all their conversations being conducted through Halsey. In his show, Cody tries to make Sitting Bull perform fictional actions, such as scalping Custer at Little Bighorn, his attitude being that "truth is whatever gets the loudest applause" (p.141). At one point, when he is drunk, Cody has a vision of Sitting Bull. The latter says nothing, and Cody tells him,

> "In one hundred years...in other people's shows... I'm still *Buffalo Bill*...star! You're still... *The Injun!*...It's *your* problem that the white man don't listen...not his! *You're* the one who's gotta suffer...White man can just forget the whole...damn...thing.'" (pp.141-42)

While the play mocks Cody's presentation of history (e.g. portraying some of his Indians as poorly disguised Brooklyn whites) and accuses him of sensationalism, it does not accuse him of blatant distortions of historical incidents: when Chief Joseph, for example, repeats his famous message to General Howard "twice a day, three times on Sundays" (p.56) it is the genuine message, not a perversion of it. (While Kopit's version differs in minor details from the one contained in the "Report of the Secretary of War, 1877"[13], it is unlikely that that version is an exact record of what was said. Moreover, if Chief Joseph did repeat the message in his Wild West Show appearances, it seems likely that it would have varied slightly from the original.) Cody, in the play, likes the Indians and tries to help them, e.g. by trying to persuade the President to visit them and listen to their grievances. (In the film the President meets Sitting Bull but refuses to listen to his request, whereupon Cody expresses his admiration for the President's skill in handling the situation -p.132.) When Sitting Bull's ghost visits him

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12. Joseph G. Rosa, "Buffalo Bill," in The Western Film and T.V. Annual, ed. F. Maurice Speed (London: Macdonald and Co., 1962), pp.30-31.

13. Quoted in Andrist, p.315.

(in the play's equivalent to the film's drunk scene quoted above) he says, "You were my friend. And, indeed, you still are." (p.88). Although in its context the remark is not without a degree of irony, Kopit's Cody is nevertheless a considerably more admirable character than Altman's.

The real Cody strove to make his show as authentic as possible[14], and was, according to Chief Rocky Bear, "a friend of the Indians."[15] Louis Whirlwind Horse, a Sioux who performed in Cody's show as a child, "remembers Cody not as an enemy but as a strict, honorable man."[16] Of Cody's relationship with Sitting Bull, Joseph Balmer, an adopted member of Sitting Bull's family clan, has written that "Cody and Sitting Bull had great respect for each other, and Sitting Bull always regarded the Colonel as his friend, and when they parted they did so with regret."[17] Thus it would seem that those who knew Cody saw him in rather more favourable terms than Kopits or Altman. Also, it should be remembered that Cody encouraged Indianness in a period when attempts were being made to turn the Indians into imitation whites. "Buffalo Bull and the Indians or Sitting Bull's History Lesson", then, follows the tradition of "Little Big Man" in the sense that in trying to show how white Americans treat people of other races it distorts history as much as the myth-makers. By 1976, however, fewer people were willing to accept such a message. Disoriented by the Vietnam War and the Watergate affair, the American public were not prepared to have any more myths or heroes deflated or discredited, and Altman's film was a resounding financial failure.[18] Other films about Indians, if not such spectacular failures, passed largely unnoticed, some examples being "Broken Treaty at Battle Mountain" (1957), "The Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday" (1976), "Winterhawk" (1976), and "The Last Hard Men" (1976).

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14. Alice J. Hall, "Buffalo Bill and the Enduring West," National Geographic, 160, No.1 (1981), 78.
15. Chief Rocky Bear (1892), quoted in ibid., p.95.
16. Ibid., p.84.
17. Joseph Balmer, "Sitting Bull," in Speed, p.42.
18. Mellen, p.341.

Further attempts at presenting a sympathetic view of the Indians were largely confined to television, where the financial risks were not so great. One such attempt was a 1977 version of James Fenimore Cooper's The Last of the Mohicans, in which Hawk-eye (Steve Forrest) has more in common with Creşta from "Soldier Blue" than Cooper's character: when Duncan Heyward (Andrew Prine) says, "I don't relish being deceived by an Indian," Hawk-eye replies, "When you've been fooled by an Indian you've been fooled by the best." Later, when one of the women finds it difficult to believe that a man like Uncas can be a savage, Hawk-eye tells her that Indians do not practise much torture now, and that such barbaric acts as scalping were taught to them by the British and the Dutch. When she refuses to accept that the British would do such a thing he tells her to "bone up" on her history. Cora seems rather more interested in Uncas than her counterpart in the book, but he is still killed off. The only merit of this film is that it allows an Indian to defeat a white in hand-to-hand combat.

Equally sympathetic, but less abounding in liberal heresies, was "The Legend of Walks Far Woman" (1979), adapted from Colin Stuart's novel Walks Far Woman, which was in turn based partly on the recollections of two Montana women. Much attention is paid to everyday village life and Sioux customs, although some of the cost-cutting of films made for television is evident in the teepees, which are sparsely decorated and, although larger than those often found in films, look rather small from the outside (although when we are shown the inside of one it miraculously grows to the correct size).

While it avoids the racist white stereotype, the view of the army is nevertheless that of "Soldier Blue" and "Little Big Man". While T.V. audience considerations and lack of finance rendered impossible a massacre like those of the earlier films, soldiers do attack and burn a peaceful village. Budgetary considerations are turned to advantage in a sequence depicting the battle at Little Bighorn, in which the major focus is the looting of dead soldiers' bodies by Indian women - an interesting change from the usual attention paid to the heroism ("They Died With Their Boots On" etc.) or madness ("Little Big Man") of Custer.

A more objective film than "The Last of the Mohicans" or "The Legend of Walks Far Woman" was "I Will Fight No More Forever" (1975), which concerned the efforts of Chief Joseph's Nez Percés to avoid going to a reservation because "We do not want to be white men; we want to be ourselves." Both the Indians and the soldiers are seen in a sympathetic light, the latter being forced to follow a policy that at least some of them find distasteful, although General Sherman believes that "the more Indians we kill this year, the less we'll have to kill next year." While the real Sherman did not talk about extermination where the real Nez Percés were concerned (announcing instead that they "must be suitably punished to discourage other tribes who might feel moved to defend their rights"[19]), such a remark does not seem uncharacteristic. The real General Howard was not the Indian sympathizer he is portrayed as (by James Whitmore) in the film, but in this case he did consider the Indians to be in the right, and he protested when Sherman and his colleagues failed to keep the promises he had made on their behalf.

Also worthy of mention is "Relentless" (1978), which had an Indian hero (Will Sampson) who, if he was no more successful at hand-to-hand combat than most of his screen predecessors, was nevertheless more capable of discerning the actions and plans of the villains than his colleage from the F.B.I. (Monte Markham).

A more recent move has been one to make a mini-series of Dee Brown's Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee. It is to be hoped that it will be an improvement on another recent mini-series dealing with Indians - "Mr. Horn". Much of this biography of Tom Horn is taken up with the capture of Geronimo, whom Horn eventually persuades to surrender. Leaving aside the fact that it is doubtful that Horn played any significant role in Geronimo's capture[20], the series offers a blatant distortion of the truth. To give an example, the following conversation between Geronimo (Enrique Lucero) and Horn (David Carradine) shows the

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19. Andrist, p.317.

20. Britton Davis, The Truth About Geronimo,with a Foreword by Robert M. Utley,ed. M.M. Quaife (1929: rpt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), pp.196-97.

carelessness with which the facts are treated:

> Geronimo: "It was a life of quiet. My mother called me the one who yawns. And then the whiteskins...: in one day they killed my mother...and my wife...and my baby... I became warchief because I was more deeply wronged than the others... Why should I surrender?"
> Horn: "Because we got 5,000 warriors; you got eleven."
> Geronimo: "A Chiricahua can run 70 miles in a day. Can a whiteskin?"

According to Geronimo himself it was Mexicans who killed his family; there were three children, not one; he became a warchief because of his reprisals against the Mexicans; he had twenty-one warriors, not eleven; and he said that a Chiricahua could travel 50 miles a day on foot, not 70,[21] While the series is sympathetic towards the Indians, like "Cheyenne Autumn" and "Soldier Blue" its disregard for the facts suggest that its makers were less concerned with the Indians than they would have us believe. The Indians are, it would seem, just another oppressed group which screen heroes can establish their liberal credentials by helping or trying to help (Horn tries to secure justice for Geronimo). Earlier examples occur in "The Magnificent Seven" (1960), in which Chris (Yul Brynner) and Vin (Steve McQueen) ensure that a dead Indian gets a decent burial in a white man's cemetery, and "High Plains Drifter" (1973), in which Clint Eastwood takes over a town and promptly ensures that a poor Indian family is supplied with free goods.

In some of the literature of the late Sixties, Indians represented the world of drugs and the Counterculture. Two of the major heroes of the Counterculture were Carlos Castaneda and Black Elk. In The Teachings of Don Juan (1968), A Separate Reality (1971), and Journey to Ixtlan (1972) Castaneda studied Don Juan, a Mexican Indian of whom he was a disciple. These books "represented the triumph of the Indian's mysticism over the anthropologist's scientism"[22], being concerned not with scientific fact,

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21. W.D. Chesney, "I Talked with Geronimo," Real West 10, No.55 (1967), 65-66 and 73.

22. Dwight W. Hoover, The Red and the Black (Chicago: Rand McNally Publishing Co., 1976), p.346.

but with "the intuitive wisdom of the heart and the psyche obtained by sharpening the senses through the use of drugs, through spiritual exercise, and through the physical training of the body."[23] John G. Neihardt's Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux (1932, reissued 1961 with Black Elk listed as the author and Neihardt as his voice) covered the thirty years from 1860 to 1890 and, along with Black Elk's experiences in famous events such as Little Bighorn, concerned visions experienced by him at various stages of his life. These visions helped him to become a medicine man. Identifying with Castaneda and Black Elk, Hippies began, in some cases, to see themselves as reincarnated Indians who had died at the hands of the white man.[24]

This new respect for Indian religions and lifestyles affected films in two ways. Firstly, the assimilation/ separatism issue was seldom debated. It was usually taken for granted, from "Cheyenne Autumn" on, that the Indians should be allowed to live in their own way rather than as whites. Miscegenation did not become generally acceptable, but it was taken less seriously. For example, in "Little Big Man", Old Lodge Skins' tale of how he once raped a white woman is treated as a joke. Also, miscegenation could be shown (rather than merely hinted at as in "Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here") without necessarily meaning death for one partner as in "Nightwing" (1979), in which Hopi Youngman Duran (Nick Mancuso) has a white girlfriend (Kathryn Harrold).

Secondly, Indian religions were given a superficial form of respect, sometimes sincerely, as in "The Trial of Billy Jack" (1974), and sometimes less so, as in "Wanda Nevada", which contained a lot of nonsense about an "Apache Ghost"; at one point he is seen astride a palamino on a hill top catching lightning bolts, which he molds into a ball and throws, causing an explosion. However, Indian religions do not lend themselves to cinematic treatments, as Indian beliefs are often totally alien to white audiences. Thus if beliefs and the meaning of ceremonies are not changed to make their motivation comprehensible to whites (as in "A Man Called Horse"), a relatively sincere depiction can

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23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., p.347.

seem as silly to a white audience as "Wanda Nevada".

Such a film is "Nightwing" (1979), adapted by Martin Cruz Smith (a half-caste Pueblo) and others from Smith's 1977 novel of the same name. It concerns Abner Tasupi (George Klutesi), an old medicine man, who tells Duran that it is time for the Fourth World (Tuwaqachi) to end and that he is going to end it. Soon after, he is mysteriously killed, and after his death the area is plagued by vampire bats. Abner's body disappears from its grave, and an Indian who has not heard of his death sees him enter a kiva with seven priests. He appears several times to Duran, and tells him that the bats are the means by which he and Masaw (the Guardian of the Underworld) will end the Fourth World (the present period). Duran is not religious, and is not prepared to stand by and see his people killed by the bats (Abner accepts some Hopi deaths as inevitable in clearing the way for the Fifth World). He helps a scientist (David Warner) to destroy the bats.

The problem faced by the film-makers was one of how to show Abner's appearances. In the novel his appearance in the village is vague - another Indian sees eight priests enter the kiva from which seven of them are retrieved dead the following day. He does not say the eighth was Abner. Likewise, it is possible that the disappearance of Abner's body has a natural explanation. Duran's meetings with Abner are drug-induced hallucinations, and it is never clear whether Abner's ghost is really appearing to him or whether his subconscious mind, helped by the drugs, is providing him with an explanation to fit facts which could be explained in other ways. At the end he knows he has saved his people from the bats, but does not know whether or not he has thwarted an attempt by Abner and Masaw to end the Fourth World.

It is not clear, from the film, that Abner's appearances are drug-induced, or that he is trying to end the world. The impression given is that he has definitely risen from the dead and is helping Duran to save a piece of sacred land from white oilmen and a greedy Indian called Chee (Stephen Macht) by causing Duran to set the cave housing the bats alight, thereby destroying the oil as well.

(In the novel Chee is progressive rather than simply greedy, and the destruction of the oil is a secondary theme.) The Hopi religion is presented as a perversion of Christianity which nevertheless has a stronger hold on the Hopis than Christianity itself does on whites. While neither of these impressions is given in the novel, the material from which both are gained is present in it. However, without the novel's explanatory material the film misrepresents Hopi religion and makes it look ridiculous.

Although most film-makers of the Seventies treated the Indians sympathetically or avoided them, others still came as close as they dared to the bad Indian stereotype. After over half a century of films in which the sight of a group of Indians on horseback tended to lead to an attack, it became a common practice to create tension by showing a band of Indians galloping towards a group of settlers or even just sitting on top of a hill looking menacing. The expected attacks, however, never eventuated. This usage was often found even in sympathetic films, such as "Across the Great Divide" (1977). Another example occurred in an episode of "The Quest" entitled "The Longest Drive" (1976). The advertisements for "Across the Great Divide " were dominated by an Indian charging on horseback. However, the most blatant example of an advertisement playing on audience expectations of Indian attacks was the poster for "Best Friends" (1974), which depicted the two leading men warding off something while their girlfriends looked frightened. This was superimposed over a picture of a group of hostile-looking Indians, and underneath was the wording: "She became the ravaged victim of a century of revenge!.,. "Best Friends"...until they crossed the wrong border." This advertisement leads the viewer to expect a film in which Indians capture the four young whites and molest one of the women. The film, however, has little to do with Indians, the only time they appear being in an unimportant incident in a bar: the dancing of one of the women attracts the attention of some Indians and leads to a fight. One of the youths is hit from behind by a large Indian and later his friend waits in an alley for the Indian and knocks him unconscious with a board. The incident has nothing to do with anything else in the film,

and was inserted, one suspects, purely in order that the Indian motif could be exploited in the advertisements. Indeed, the film had little else to recommend it.

By the 1980s the increasing difficulties experienced by film producers in making their films break even, let alone making a profit, had convinced them that fewer risks should be taken.[25] While their concern was mainly to do with budgets, the films of the last few years suggested a return to the policy of not challenging audience perceptions. The use of Indians for tension indicated a reluctance to abandon the bad Indian stereotype accompanied by a fear of Indian protests should screen Indians be actually portrayed as rampaging savages. However, Indian/white relations in the West had, in the past, produced some very successful films, and in a period of financial uncertainty any subject that was a proven moneymaker could hardly be avoided indefinitely. Having attempted to make films acceptable to Indians (such as "A Man Called Horse") and failed, film-makers had little choice but to revert to the old stereotypes. Accordingly, the bad Indian has resurfaced in "The Mountain Men" (1980) and a new 3-D film entitled "Comin' at You" (1981) in which Indians delight in firing flaming arrows in the direction of the camera in a similar manner to their predecessors in the 3-D Westerns of the Fifties (such as "The Charge at Feather River"). The noble savage has returned in "Eagle's Wing" (1979) and "The Legend of the Lone Ranger" (1981). In the Fifties, as suggested earlier,Tonto was a good Indian, who, in the words of Vine Deloria,

> never rebelled, never questioned the Lone Ranger's judgment, never longed to go back to the tribe for the annual Sun Dance. Tonto was a cultureless Indian for Indians and an uncultured Indian for whites.[26]

While Tonto (Michael Horse) still does not question the Lone Ranger's (Klinton Spilsbury) judgement, he is not lacking in culture, and does not hesitate to follow the customs of his tribe regardless of what the Lone Ranger's reactions

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25. Hans Petrovic, "The End of $30 Million Movies," The Press, 1 January, 1981, p.10, cols. 7-8.

26. Deloria, p.201.

might be: in "The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold" (1958) even Red Bird, a noble savage, seeks the Lone Ranger's approval before using any of the many Indian "ways to loosen (the) tongue of (a) silent man." There is never any question of Tonto doing anything the Lone Ranger would not do. However, in a similar situation in "The Legend of the Lone Ranger" when one of the villains (Matt Clark) refuses to talk, Tonto, without so much as a glance at the Lone Ranger, produces his knife and prepares to scalp the man. (Lest any of the above should give the impression that "The Legend of the Lone Ranger" represents an improvement on its predecessors it should be stated that while Tonto has a culture, it is purely that of the "Hollywood tribe" and is not attributed to any real tribe. For example, the Lone Ranger and Tonto are "blood brothers" - a fictional concept of European origins. Facile references to the white man's treatment of the Indians abound, such as one in which the Lone Ranger recommends Helen Hunt Jackson's A Century of Dishonor to the heroine without making any mention of its subject matter, and another in which Ulysses S. Grant expresses displeasure when Buffalo Bill Cody boasts of having shot all the buffalo. While displaying a superficial sympathy for the Indians, the film portrays George Armstrong Custer as one of the heroes working alongside the Lone Ranger and Tonto. The Lone Ranger films of the Fifties never went to such extremes of bad taste. Nor, one might add, were they as boring.)

The good Indian has shown fewer signs of a revival. Since separatism is now accepted as desirable, the idea of an Indian rejecting his culture to follow a white hero is likely to have little appeal. Nevertheless, the good Indian is not quite dead. "The Mountain Men" contains a Crow called Medicine Wolf (David Ackroyd), who has in the past been a travelling companion of the hero, Bill Tyler (Charlton Heston), and uses the last of his strength, which has been sapped by his treatment at the hands of his Blackfoot captors, to deliver a message to Tyler.

Thus it would seem that after over three quarters of a century of film-making, Indian portrayals are largely back where they started.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

After roughly ninety years of film-making the Indians are now, it would appear, back where they were at shortly after the birth of the cinema. Thus one might easily assume (as many writers on the subject have) that little or no progress has been made. Yet a closer look at the changing procession of Indian portrayals does reveal a degree of progress. The circle has turned three times, with each wave of sympathetic films being accompanied by a wave of Indian protests which, however legitimate, have failed to take into account the good intentions of the film-makers and the merits of the films involved. However, before each group of sympathetic films disappeared under a tide of Indian complaints and/or public apathy, a few films which made notable advances on their predecessors appeared. Accordingly, although it would be difficult to verify at this point in time, it seems unlikely that any of the sympathetic films of the period 1908 to 1911 displayed the perception of such Fifties' films as "The Last Hunt", "Navajo", "Apache" or "Run of the Arrow". Similarly, despite its faults, "A Man Called Horse", from the period 1965 to 1972, represented a notable change in attitude towards accuracy. In the same period, "Ulzana's Raid" and "When the Legends Die" offered more realistic assessments of the problems of the clash of cultures.

Each period of sympathetic films has been followed by a period in which the Indians have been pushed into the background and become simply barriers to civilization. Consequently, it does not seem unlikely that more and better films concerning the Indians will appear in the future, but if the intentions of sympathetic film-makers are not to be thwarted by further Indian complaints, Indians will have to appreciate that white film-makers are psychologically incapable of venturing far beyond the basic stereotypes. If this is too much to expect, Indians must at least be prepared to state their complaints more tactfully and give credit where it is due. The only alternative is for them to obtain positions of power in the film industry. However, as has been seen in the case of

"A Gunfight", Indian investors are no more willing to tamper with audience perceptions than white investors.

As the best of the serious films on the subject have improved upon their predecessors, cumulative advances have been made in some areas. Miscegenation between white men and Indian women has long been acceptable, and while miscegenation between white women and Indian men has not generally been encouraged, it is now permissible as, for example, in "Nightwing" and a recent episode of the T.V. series "Kojak".

Perhaps because of their separatist viewpoint, the acceptability of miscegenation on the screen has never been a matter of concern to real Indians (although "Nightwing" was written by a mixed-blood), whose main objection has been to their portrayal as inferior fighters. While there is still a reluctance to let an Indian defeat a white man in hand-to-hand combat, it does happen in films such as "The Last Hard Men" (1976), in which half-breed villain Provo (James Coburn) is more than a match for hero Sam Burgade (Charlton Heston), and "My One and Only". While it is hardly necessary to repeat the section on Indian complaints at this point, it is worth noting here that the complaint that Indian films are usually set in the Nineteenth Century has been largely rectified by television: at present the bulk of Indian portrayals are in television series set in the present day, such as "Vegas", "The Bionic Woman", and "The Six Million Dollar Man", a 1976 episode of which ("The Secret of Bigfoot") concerned an Indian scientist (Donn Whyte). Also, a television biography of a modern Indian - boxer Danny Lopex - is reportedly on the way, although Indians are hardly likely to approve of the casting of Leif Garrett as Lopez.

One area in which one might hope for some progress is the casting of Indians in roles to which their Indianness is incidental. In Canada this has been achieved in the television series "The Beachcombers" (1977). While Indian issues were sometimes dealt with in the series, frequently the fact that two of the leading characters were Indians was neither referred to nor served as an underlying theme. In the United States it has been rare for an Indian to be portrayed as a member of society without reference to the

fact that he is an Indian, although it is now common for Blacks to appear in such roles. For Indians such roles have customarily been minor ones, as in "The Birth of a Nation" (1914), in which Chief Dark Cloud portrayed a general, and "Sweet Hostage" (1975), in which one of the townsmen was an Indian. The only major role of this kind known to the writer was that of quarter-caste Cherokee Tulsa McLean in "G.I. Blues" (1960), whose mixed blood is referred to only once and never obstructs his relationship with his all-white girlfriend/fiancé.

Yet perhaps the reason for the difference between the treatment of Indians and Blacks indicates the degree of concern in Hollywood for the different aspirations of minority groups: Blacks seek assimilation, and in films at least they have been granted it. Indians want separatism, and Hollywood has kept them distinctly separate. While "The Beachcombers" sometimes treated its Indian characters as ordinary citizens with no distinctive characteristics, it also preached assimilation on some occasions, most notably in an episode entitled "Aunt Rita". It has been observed that the American film industry has consistently followed official political attitudes.[1] Yet as we have seen, where the Indians are concerned it has not: during the history of the cinema Government policy has fluctuated from assimilation (the Dawes Act, which was in force at the birth of the cinema) to separatism (Collier's Indian Reorganization Act), and finally back to assimilation (termination). Despite such assimilationist films as "De-Indianizing the Red Man" (1917) and "The Indian Fighter" (1955), Hollywood film-makers have, for the most part, presented a separatist viewpoint, if not always for the right reasons.

Finally, while it cannot be denied that some film-makers have acted irresponsibly at times in their treatment of the Indians, for the most part they have done little more than perpetuate perceptions inherited from nineteenth-century literature and commonly held by the public. Thus if Hollywood is to be nailed to a cross for its perfidy towards the Indians, it must be remembered that it is paying for the sins of the American people, whose views it has reflected.

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1. Furhammar and Isaksson, p.215.

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D. FILMS

Almost all of the descriptive material and dialogue quotes in this thesis were obtained from viewings of the films during the course of this study or shortly before its commencement. The films listed below are those that were studied in detail with repeated viewings or from recordings of the soundtracks.

"Apache" (1954). Dir. Robert Aldrich.

"Broken Arrow" (1950). Dir. Delmer Daves.

"Broken Lance" (1954). Dir. Edward Dmytryk.

"Buffalo Bill" (1944). Dir. William Wellman.

"The Charge at Feather River" (1953). Dir. Gordon Douglas.

"Cheyenne Autumn" (1964). Dir. John Ford.

"Flaming Star" (1960). Dir. Don Siegel.

"Fort Apache" (1948). Dir. John Ford.

"The Legend of the Boy and the Eagle" (1967).

"The Legend of Walks Far Woman" (1979). Dir. Mel Damski.

"The Light in the Forest" (1958). Dir. Herschel Daugherty.

"Little Big Man" (1970). Dir. Arthur Penn.

"Mr. Horn" (c.1979). Dir. Jack Starrett.

"Relentless" (1978). Dir. Lee H. Katzin.

"Soldier Blue" (1970). Dir. Ralph Nelson.

"Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here" (1969). Dir. Abraham Polonsky.

"They Died with their Boots On" (1941). Dir. Raoul Walsh.

"The Tin Star" (1957). Dir. Anthony Mann.

"Ulzana's Raid" (1972). Dir. Robert Aldrich.

"War of the Wildcats" (1943). Dir. Albert S. Rogell.

"The War Wagon" (1967). Dir. Burt Kennedy.

"When the Legends Die" (1972). Dir. Stuart Miller.

"White Feather" (1955). Dir. Robert D. Webb.